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Works

NICHOL'S SERIES OF STANDARD DIVINES.

PURITAN PERIOD.

With General Preface

BY JOHN C. MILLER, D.D.,

LINCOLN COLLEGE; HONORARY CANON OF WORCESTER; RECTOR OF GREENWICH.

THE

WORKS OF GEORGE SWINNOCK, M.A.

VOL. V.

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THE WORKS

OF

GEORGE SWINNOCK, M.A.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING:

THE DOOR OF SALVATION OPENED BY THE KEY OF REGENERATION,

AND

THE SINNER'S LAST SENTENCE.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET AND CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

M.DCCC.LXVIII.

EDINBURGH :
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORK.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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GEORGE SWINNOCK, M.A.

A VERY brief space will suffice to give the reader all the information that we have been able to procure respecting the life of the author of these works.

George Swinnock was born at Maidstone in the year 1627. We learn some particulars respecting his family from the dedication of one of his works. The treatise called "The Fading of the Flesh" was originally a funeral sermon preached on occasion of the death of Mr Caleb Swinnock. To it is prefixed a twofold dedication; one to the widow of Caleb Swinnock, the other to the Mayor, &c., of Maidstone. Mrs Caleb Swinnock he addresses as his "Honoured Cousin." Now, of course, we know that this term was used with great latitude, but we think it probable that Caleb was his cousin-german. In the dedication to the Mayor and corporation of Maidstone, he says,—"The occasion of it, as is well known to you, was the death of your neighbour, and my dear relation, Master Caleb Swinnock, who was interred May 21, 1662, whose father and grandfather had three or four times enjoyed the highest honour, and exercised the highest office, in your corporation." Now if, as we suppose, Caleb was the full cousin of George, Caleb's father must have been George's uncle, and Caleb's grandfather must have been George's grandfather. If then his grandfather and his uncle were three or four times chosen to the Mayoralty of Maidstone, the family must have been one of good standing in the place.

From one of these dedications we learn further, that George was brought up for some time in the house of Robert, the father of Caleb; and from this it is perhaps admissible to conjecture that he lost his own father at an early age, and was adopted by his

uncle Robert. The passage containing the information from which we draw this inference gives us an interesting view of the arrangements of a Puritan household, and of the early training which our author received. It is as follows:—

"I had the happiness some time to be brought up with him in his father's, Mr Robert Swinnock's family; whose house—I cannot but speak it to the glory of God—had holiness to the Lord written upon it. His manner was to pray twice a day by himself, once or twice a day with his wife, and twice a day with his family, besides singing psalms, reading and expounding scriptures, which morning and evening were minded. The Sabbath he dedicated wholly to God's service, and did not only himself, but took care that all within his gate should spend the day in secret and private duties, and in attendance on public ordinances. Of their proficiency by the last, he would take an account upon their return from the assembly. His house indeed was, as Tremellius saith of Cranmer's, *Palæstra pietatis*, a school of religion."

It is evidently from this passage that Wood derived his information respecting the early years of Swinnock. The prominent particulars of his after-life are sufficiently stated in Wood's account, the greater part of which we transfer to our pages.

"George Swinnock was born in the ancient borough of Maidstone, in Kent, anno 1627; brought up religiously, when a child, in the family of Robert Swinnock, a most zealous Puritan of that town; educated in Cambridge, till he was Bachelor of Arts; went to Oxon to get preferment, in the latter end of 1647, at which time he entered himself a Commoner of Magdalen Hall. Soon after he became one of the Chaplains of New College, and, on the 6th day of October following, (1648,) he was made Fellow of Bal. College, by the authority of the visitors appointed by Parliament. In 1650 he became vicar of Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire, and thereupon resigning his Fellowship, on the 24th of November the same year, took the degree of Master of Arts six days after. In 1660, or thereabouts, he was made vicar of Great Kemble, in Bucks, and in August 1662, being ejected for Nonconformity, he was received into the family of Richard Hampden, of Great Hampden, in the said county of Bucks, Esq., and continued with him for some time in the quality of a chaplain. At length, upon the issuing out of His Majesty's declaration for liberty of conscience, in the latter end of

the year 1671, he retired to his native place, where he continued in preaching and praying among the godly till the time of his death. His works are these, ...

"What other things this Mr Swinnock (who was accounted an eminent preacher among those of his persuasion) hath written I know not, nor anything else of him, only that he died on the 10th day of November 1673, and was buried in the church of Maidstone before-mentioned. In that most virulent and diabolical pamphlet called *Mirabilis Annus Secundus*, is a story of one Mr Swinnock, a minister in St Martin's Lane, near Canon Street, in London, sometime chaplain to one of the Sheriffs of that city, who, for his conformity to the Church of England, and for wearing a surplice, which he began to do on the 21st of September 1662, (after he had often said among the brethren he would rather burn than conform, &c., as the author of the said *Mirabilis Annus Secundus* saith), it pleased the Lord (as he further adds) to strike him with sickness, which proved a violent burning fever, whereof, within a few days after, before another Lord's day came about, he died, &c. Who this Mr Swinnock was I cannot tell; neither doth the author set down his Christian name, otherwise we might have said something more of him—something to the disproof of that most vile author."

This account of our Swinnock is less tainted with bitterness than are most of Antony's notices of distinguished Puritans; but his characteristic *animus* is displayed in the gratuitous introduction of the other Swinnock, with whom he had nothing whatever to do, inasmuch as he had no ground for supposing that he was an Oxonian, or rather, he had the certainty that he was not an Oxonian. It is very much as if he had said: Well, I have nothing very particular to say against George Swinnock; but there is another Swinnock about whom a certain story is told. It will be noticed he had no suspicion that that Swinnock was the man of whom he was writing, for he knew quite well that he was never a minister in London. It would be rather hard if any particular member of the family, say, of the *Smiths*, were to be held guilty of all the misdeeds ever committed by all who have borne that not unfrequent name! It is amusing also to notice the logic of his assumption. If he only knew something of the matter, he would certainly be able to "disprove that most vile author."

The account of Swinnock contained in the "Nonconformist's Memorial" is very brief. It is as follows:—

"Great Kymble, [V.] £23. George Swinnock, M.A., born at Maidstone in Kent. He was first at Cambridge, and removed to Oxford, where he was chosen Fellow of Baliol Col. After his ordination he was vicar of Rickmansworth, Herts; and then of Great Kymble, where he was ejected for Nonconformity in 1662; upon which he became chaplain to R. Hampden, Esq. of Great Hampden. Upon the Indulgence in 1672, he removed to Maidstone, where he became pastor of a considerable congregation. He died Nov. 10, 1673. He was a man of good abilities, and a serious, warm, and practical useful preacher.

"Works.—The Door of Salvation opened by the Key of Regeneration. The Christian Man's Calling. Heaven and Hell Epitomized. The Beauty of Magistrates. Treatise on the Incomparableness of God in His Being, Attributes, &c. The Sinner's last Sentence. The Life of Mr J. Wilson. Several occasional Sermons."

It will be noticed that we have not inserted the life of Mr Wilson amongst Swinnock's works. It would have been scarcely in keeping with the character of this series to have included a merely biographical work.

As to the merits of Swinnock as an author, we beg to subjoin the estimate of the late Dr James Hamilton of London, with which we substantially agree:—

"George Swinnock was a native of Maidstone in Kent, and for some time was a fellow of Baliol College, Oxford. His first charge was Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, but at the time of his ejection from the Church of England, he had been translated to Great Kymble, in Bucks. For nine years thereafter, he was chaplain to the great protector of Nonconformity in Buckinghamshire, Richard Hampden; but availing himself of the indulgence in 1671, he removed to his native town, Maidstone, and became pastor of a considerable congregation there, and died Nov. 10, 1673.

"Except to a few collectors, the writings of Swinnock are almost unknown; but we confess that we have rejoiced in them as those that find great spoil. So pithy and pungent, and so practical, few books are more fitted to keep the attention awake, and few so richly reward it. No doubt there are a good many far-fetched similes,

and not a little apocryphal science; but these are what we look for in that period of our literature, and they are abundantly overbalanced by a rare amount of sanctified wit and wisdom.

"For instance, to show that 'the lack of fervency is the loss of many prayers,' he subjoins—'The lazy petition is eaten up by wandering thoughts, like cold honey by wasps and flies; whilst fervent prayers, like honey boiling over the fire, are free from such ill guests.' Again, to illustrate the same idea, 'There is no getting to the Indian Mines by the cold northern seas; though, because it is a shorter cut, some have attempted that way, and lost their labour.' Amongst many other curiosities of natural history, he tells us—on the authority of Pliny, however—that 'when one bee is sick, the rest in the hive are all sad;' and he mentions that horse-hairs, by lying nine days under water, turn to snakes. In our own boyhood we remember a species of gordius, common in still water, which the country people believed to be an animated horse-hair. But some of his inferences are so ingenious, that we must not quarrel with the fact on which they are founded. Thus: 'There is a story of a bastard eagle, which hath one foot close like a goose, with which she swims in the waters, and dives for fish; and another foot open, and armed with talons, with which she soareth in the air, and seizeth her prey; but she, participating of both natures, is weak in either, and at last becomes a prey to every ordinary vulture. The *ambidexter* in religion, who is both for the flesh and the spirit, for riches and righteousness, is all his time a servant of sin, and will at last become a prey to Satan.' Again: 'As the carbuncle, a beast among the blackamoors, which is seen only by night, having a stone in his forehead, which shineth incredibly and giveth him light whereby to feed, but when he heareth the least noise, he presently lets fall over it a skin which he hath as a natural covering, lest its splendour should betray him; so the half-Christian shines with the light of holiness by fits and starts—every fright makes him hold in and hide it.'"

With reference to his erroneous views on some points in natural history, we would notice that he does not generally seem to us to believe them himself, but to use them simply as illustrations, as many writers among ourselves would have to scruple in deriving an illustration from the fable of the phœnix.

To our thinking, the greatest defect in his works is a certain want of concentration. There are many chapters in some of his

treatises which are very admirable in themselves, but which do not seem to have any special right to the places which they occupy. They look somewhat as if he had had them by him, and thought them too good to be lost. In this we quite agree, but would rather have had them as separate treatises or fragments.

But despite slight blemishes, the writings of Swinnock are of a very high order. His principal work, "The Christian Man's Calling," is one of the fullest, and, we venture to think, one of the best exhibitions of the gospel in its application to the ordinary affairs of life. There are few better works of practical religion in our language. We commend the whole works to the prayerful and frequent perusal of Christian readers, and them to the grace and blessing of our God.

THOMAS HALL, B.D.

As about a third part of vol. iv. is by Mr Hall, we subjoin the account of him given in the "Nonconformist's Memorial":—

"Norton, Kings [C. or D.] Thomas Hall, B.D. Of Oxford, under Dr Lushington. Born at Worcester. He here succeeded his brother Mr John Hall, when he removed to Bromsgrove, and applied himself in earnest to do good to souls. His salary being small, he kept the free-school, and continued single. As God owned his labours in the place, he would not be persuaded to leave it, though solicited with a promise of far greater preferment. During the civil war he was often accused, cursed, threatened with death, plundered, and five times imprisoned. He constantly preached twice on the Lord's-day, and held lectures abroad, besides his exposition, catechising, private admonition, &c. He was a very hard student, and considerable scholar, a well-furnished divine, a man of a public spirit, and intent upon spreading knowledge. He gave many valuable books to the library at Birmingham, and persuaded his brethren to do the same. He prevailed with the parish to build a public library, and gave to it the books in his own study in his life-time. He was of a free and liberal heart; and when his property was gone, he lived by faith. In his last illness his stock was reduced to sixpence; but he was easy, and said it was enough; and so it proved, with providential additions; for before it was

gone, several sealed papers of money were sent him by unknown friends. He was of a holy and unblameable life; very humble and easy of access to the meanest inhabitant of his parish, whom he was as ready to serve, if in his power, as the greatest. He was a great lover of peace, but would in no case part with purity to purchase it. He was a plain, but fervent and useful preacher; who taught by his life, as well as by his doctrine. He was a man of a very lovely and active spirit, never cast down with difficulties, and notwithstanding all he met with, was to the last as ready for his duty, when opportunity offered, as ever. When he was near his end, he thus expressed himself: 'I am now going where I shall have rest from sin and Satan, from all fear, weariness, and watching; and from all the evils and errors of a wicked world; even so come, Lord Jesus, for I long for Thy coming.' And when the pangs of death were upon him, he said, 'All the joys of this life are nothing, nothing to the joys I have in Jesus Christ.' He died April 13, 1665. His life was written by Mr R. Moore. Wood gives an account of Mr Hall, which on the whole is favourable, and quotes from Moore's 'Pearl in an Oyster-shell,' the following passage:—'He was a person of great integrity and single-heartedness in his ministry; of a fine and liberal heart; just, and one that lived much by faith; of a holy and unblameable life; of a humble deportment; a great lover of peace; a plain and profitable preacher,' &c. He was buried in the churchyard of King's-Norton.

"Works: Apologia pro Ministerio Evang: Francof.—The Pulpit guarded—the Font guarded—the Schools guarded; a Defence of H. L.—The Beauty of Holiness—A Treatise against long Hair, Painting, &c.—Wisdom's Conquest; a Translation of the 13th Book of Ovid's Metam.—Phæton's Folly; a Translat. of the 2d Book of ditto.—Hometius Enervatus: or a Treatise against the Millenaries.—Sal Terræ: or a Guard to Ministers, and their Maintenance. An Exposition by Way of Supp. on Amos, chap. iv.-ix. Samaria's Downfall: a Comment on Hosea xiii. 12, 16.—The Beauty of Magistracy: an Expos. of Psalm lxxxii.—A practical and polemical Comment on 2 Tim. iii. & iv. A Treatise against May Poles. A Scrip. Disc. of the Apostacy of Antichrist. Wood mentions some others, of no great importance."

THE DOOR OF SALVATION OPENED

BY THE

KEY OF REGENERATION.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Worshipful Sir Charles Herboard, Knight; to the Worshipful Sir Richard Franklin, Knight; John Beresford, Esq.; Edward Ironside, Esq.; Richard Beresford, Esq.; and to the Gentlemen, Yeomen, and the rest of the Inhabitants of the Parish of Rickmersworth.

It is the custom of our country, and if I mistake not, a statute law of the nation, that children should be kept and maintained by those places in which they were born. This book, which treateth of the babe of grace, was conceived in your parish, brought forth in your pulpit, and now presenteth itself to you, not for your protection and patronage, but for your perusal and practice.

I confess that I am bound to many of you in courtesy, to all in duty; and I know not better how to express my thankfulness to some, and my faithfulness to all, than by dealing uprightly with you in the concernments of your souls: 'God is my witness, whom I (desire to) serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,' Rom. i. 9; and can, through the strength of Christ, much more rejoice in one of your conversions, than in all your possessions. Ye know what a large epistle I have already written to you;[1] I beseech you to read it often, and oh that the Lord would write it within you! We live in days that are full of division; but all that have any face of religion, or form of godliness, will acknowledge the things which I have written to you to be the commandments of God. My chief work is, and hath been, to preach unto you repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; which are of such infinite weight in order to your unchangeable welfares; and

[1] To the Reader in *Hell and Heaven Epitomised.*

could I prevail with you heartily to embrace those essentials of God's word, I should have confidence of your joyful appearance in the other world. It is a sign of a very foul stomach, to loathe such solid food as those vitals of Christianity are, and to pick at kickshaws or salads,—I mean either the new-fangled opinions of some upstart way, or the vain flourishes of human wit. Oh how gladly would I stand forth to your comfort at the judgment seat of Christ, which that I may, I earnestly request you again and again, in obedience to your blessed Saviour, and for the sake of your precious souls, to ponder and practise these three particulars. Consider that they are not only commended to you by your weak and dying minister, but commanded you by your Maker, who will within a short time reckon with you for the performance of them.

First, Make conscience of, and be diligent about, the means of grace; neglect not secret, private, or public ordinances. Your bodies may as probably live without diet, as your souls without duties. This is God's way, by which he infuseth grace where it is wanting, and increaseth grace where it is. As the head by the nerves and sinews, as organs, conveyeth animal spirits to the whole body, so doth the church's head, Christ Jesus, by ordinances convey his Spirit and grace to his members. Doth not experience teach you that your hearts are like water; though heated a little while over the fire of the means of grace, yet are no sooner taken off, but they are returning to their former coldness. Mariners that swim against wind and tide, must row hard and continue at it; if they intermit but a little while, how far and how forcibly are they carried backwards! It is not unknown to you, if ye have any knowledge in spiritual affairs, how busily and unweariedly the devil, world and flesh, are drawing you to hell; it highly concerneth you to be always, by duties, fetching in supplies from above, if ever ye would arrive at heaven. I do not wonder that many in our perilous times, who live above duties, are given up to the sensuality of blasphemies. The papists say, that if they can get the protestants out of their strongholds of Scripture, into the open fields of councils and fathers, they could quickly be able to foil them. If Satan can prevail with men but to throw away the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, and the prayer of faith, which engageth Christ himself in the combat, he will never doubt the conquest. While men walk in the king's highway, between sun and sun, they have the protection of the law; if otherwise, it is at their own peril. If you keep the way of God, he will be your guard; but if you wander and leave him, no wonder if he leave you. And certainly woe will be

to you when God departeth from you. A dreadful night of darkness must needs be expected when the sun is departed.

The ministry of the word is called 'the salt of the earth,' Mat. v.; saints are called doves: 'Who are those that fly as doves to their windows.' Now the property of doves is to be exceedingly in love with a salt stone; kites and rooks care little for it, but doves are mightly incited to it. Graceless persons neglect and despise the means of grace; but they that ever enjoyed God in them, cannot but set a due price upon them. The beggar, the poor in spirit, will know that door again at which he hath received a good dole: 'I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me.'

Secondly, Mind the religious education of your children. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It was the wish of Crates that he were upon the top of the highest hill in the world, that from thence he might cry out against monstrous parents, that toil to leave their children great estates, but take no care what manner of persons they should be which should enjoy those estates. I doubt not but ye are careful to breed your sons gentlemen, or to bring them up to trades, that they may know how to live a few days in the world; but, alas! how few of you are solicitous to breed them new creatures, and to bring them up to Christianity, that they may know how to live for ever in the other world! I remember that Augustine speaks mournfully: Some praise my father for being at such cost, even beyond his estate, in my nurture; but, alas! his care was to make me an orator, not to make me a Christian. I am confident many a child bemoans that, now he is damned in hell, which the father did when he was conversant on earth. I cannot condemn the education of children, according to the quality of their parents, nor their bringing up to particular callings; this latter I am sure is a duty, but that which is first should be last, and that which is last should be first. Your greatest care, and that in the first place, should be to seek the kingdom of God for yourselves and children, and then other things shall be added to you. Caleb gave his daughter the upper and the nether springs. Oh labour that yours may, with Jacob, have the dews of heaven, as well as the fatness of the earth.

Elisha wept when he saw Hazael, 2 Kings viii. 12, 13, and foresaw that he would slay young men, and dash the children against the wall; do not some of you give far greater occasion of weeping, if possible tears of blood, in slaying and murdering the souls of your dear children, teaching them, by your patterns, to live like heathens

and atheists. Believe it, God committeth the charge of, and will account with you for, all the souls in your families. When Cain had slain his brother Abel, God called to him, 'Where is thy brother Abel? And Cain said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood at thine hand,' Gen. iv. 9–11. So suppose God should whisper one of you in the ear, Cruel father, careless master, where is thy child or servant, that died so many months or years ago? You may possibly think what Cain spake, Lord, I know not, whether in heaven or hell; was I their keeper? Oh think of it with speed, and reform! May not God reply very truly, Cursed sinner, vile wretch, what hast thou done? the voice of thy child, of thy servant's, soul-blood crieth to me from hell. And now thou art cursed from hell, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy son's, thy servant's, soul at thy hand. Friends, friends, what will you do, when God shall thus deal with you for your neglect of relative duties? Possibly ye may think I deal too sharply; but truly the reason is because I know that sin will not deal mildly, either with you or yours. And should I not give you warning, the blood of your own and children's souls would be required at my hands.[1] Good Lord, that ye did but believe what it is to be guilty of others' blood! Heathens and infidels provide for the body and temporal well-being of their children, and what do many of you more? Bears that bring forth misshapen whelps, will, by licking them, bring them to a better form. Your children are brought forth enemies to God, and are by nature children of wrath, and heirs of eternal death; doth it not behove you to strive that, by religious nurture, they may become children of the promise, and heirs of eternal life.

Thirdly, Make sure of regeneration; be never satisfied till ye can, upon Scripture grounds, affirm that your natures are regenerated. This, this is the one thing necessary. Your all hangs upon this hinge. If this be not done, ye are undone, undone eternally. All your profession, civility, privileges, gifts, duties, are ciphers, and signify nothing unless regeneration be the figure put before them. It is regeneration that will make you the sons of God, the members of Christ, the temples of the Spirit, that will give you a holy improvement of all providences, a right to all the promises,

[1] Holy Greenham saith, that many men's children shall follow them up and down in hell, cursing them and crying out on them for neglecting to instruct them.

and at last the purchased possession. It is regeneration that will teach you to live like men, like Christians, like angels, in the love and fruition of the infinitely blessed God. Oh the price of this pearl is not known in this beggarly world!

A grave and wise counsellor of France, being desirous in his old age to retire himself, was entreated by the king to write down some directions, and leave with him, for the more prosperous government of his realm. The counsellor took some paper, and wrote on the top, moderation; in the middle, moderation; at the bottom, moderation. Demosthenes being asked what was the chief thing in an orator, answered, elocution; and being demanded the same question three times, what made an orator, he still gave the same answer. Augustine being demanded what was the greatest requisite of a Christian, what was the first, second, and third, still answered, humility, humility, humility.[1] Truly what the counsellor said of moderation, the Grecian of elocution, and the father of humility, I shall say of regeneration. If you ask me what is the chiefest thing in the world for a man to mind; what is that which is worthy of all his time, and strength, and thoughts, and words, and actions? I answer, regeneration. If you demand what is that which is of greatest necessity and excellency, that bringeth in the greatest profit, delight, and happiness? I answer, regeneration. He that hath this, hath all that is worth having; the having of this is heaven. He that wanteth this hath nothing; the whole world cannot make up the want of this; the want of this is hell. O sirs, your everlasting making or marring dependeth upon your sincerity or hypocrisy in this! Of what infinite consequence is it therefore to you, in whatsoever ye come short, to make sure here! Alas! when ye come to throw your last cast for eternity, how will the stoutest of you do to look death in the face, without regeneration in your hearts! God hath, in a hundred texts of Scripture, devoted all unregenerate ones to the unquenchable fire; and can any of you think to make him a liar? Believe it, as soon as death landeth you at the other world, you will have other thoughts of God and his truths than now ye have.

For your help in this work, which is of such absolute indispensable necessity unto your never-dying souls, I commend to you this treatise, beseeching the blessed God to make it serviceable unto your salvations. Ignatius, when he heard a clock strike, would say, I have one hour more to answer for. I must tell you that ye have eighteen hours, eighteen sermons more to answer for. When they

[1] Aug. Epist. 56, ad Diosc.

were preached, they had from some of you a favourable attention; now they are printed—it is not unknown what providence brought them to the press—I wish they may have within you an effectual operation, that both the author and his labours may appear to your joy at that great and terrible day.

These things being finished, 'I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to (bring you home, who are out of Christ, and to) build you up (who are in Christ), and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified,' Acts xx. 32.—And subscribe myself, your servant for Jesus' sake,

GEORGE SWINNOCK.

Jan. 20, 1659.

TO THE READER.

CHRISTIAN READER,—As there are two things which commend a place, the fruitfulness of the soil, and the pleasantness of the situation—the one suiting the necessities, and the other the comforts of life; so there are two things which commend a book—the worthiness of the matter therein handled, and the skilfulness of the hand that contrived it. Upon both accounts this gracious treatise justly deserveth with good men acceptation and value; the matter thereof, viz., the doctrine of regeneration, being of most absolute necessity to the being of a Christian; and the manner of handling it being so quick and elegant, as cannot but convince the judgment, and gratify the palate, of the most serious reader; it being like the land of Canaan, full of milk and honey, a sweetness which doth both nourish and cleanse. And as once David did consecrate the spoils of the Gentiles to the building of the temple, so hath the author adorned this his spiritual treatise with a sanctified application of many pertinent histories in human authors, to the attempering thereof the better unto the most delicate minds.

I shall not detain the reader by any discourse on regeneration, the nature and necessity whereof I find so fully handled in this book, but shall commend the perusal thereof unto all sorts of readers; it being so written as may, by God's blessing, be very likely to convince and convert those who are strangers to regeneration, if they will bring but self-love to the reading of it, and as may fill the mouths and hearts of those who are partakers of so great a benefit with praises unto God, their heavenly Father by gracious adoption, and unto the Lord Christ, their second Adam, and spiritual Father by powerful regeneration, to whose blessing I commend the work, the author, and the reader,

ED. REYNOLDS.

January 31, 1659.

AN EPISTLE TO THE READER.

READER,—In how happy a time dost thou live, when God sendeth so many and so powerful messengers, to call thee from the ways of sin and death! And how miserable and unexcusable wilt thou prove, if thou be after all this a stranger to the life of faith, of holiness! If nature had made thee a spiritual person, a child of God, and an heir of heaven, this doctrine of regeneration might then be received as strangely as it was by Nicodemus, and as neglectfully as it is by careless worldlings, and as disdainfully as it is by unbelieving and malignant enemies of the Holy Ghost. But sooner may you hope to find a new way into the world or a state of nature, besides the way of human birth, than to find another way into the state of grace, and the kingdom of heaven, besides the new birth, by the Spirit. Nature proclaimeth its own vitiosity to every diligent observer. He that is so carnal as not to observe it, in the crossness and rebellion of his soul against God, and the world's captivity to self and flesh, one would think should yet be so rational as to observe it, in the confusion and inordinate behaviour of men to one another; while self is exalted against the good of friends and neighbours, yea, and against the common good, and that so incurably, as the wars and calamities of the nations do signify: 'From whence comes wars and fightings among men? come they not hence, even of their lusts that war against their members?' James iv. 1. But the corrupted soul is so conformed to the world's corrupted state, that it is no wonder if he perceive no need of a restorer, and so be in the heart an infidel upon that account; as a man born blind may think the world hath no great need of the sun, because his eyes are so conform to a state of darkness, that the night seemeth to him as good as the day. As all the creatures which we daily see condemn the atheist that denieth their Creator, so all the spots and blemishes of the creatures, especially the universal pravity of mankind, condemneth the infidel, that, seeing not original sin and misery, denieth the necessity of a Redeemer; and the holiness of renewed souls about him doth further condemn him

that doth not acknowledge the sanctifier, who is the cause. The reparation of vitiated nature is a mysterious but glorious work of God, which angels desire to pry into, and all the regenerate rejoice in and admire, as having themselves been made partakers of so sweet and excellent a share. The kingdom of darkness is a confederacy of wicked angels and men, that are all ruled by one malicious principal governor, Mat. xii. 24–30, and xxv. 41, &c., whose work is to mar the work of God, that nature may not attain its primitive and proper end. And the kingdom of Christ is the holy society, headed by him that hath made it his undertaken work to be the repairer of depraved nature, and to destroy the works of the devil, and to remove impediments, and conquer opposition, and carry on his healing work, that nature may yet attain its ends, in despite of sin, and death, and hell.

As ever you would not be guilty of contemning this wonderful work, nature's reparation, elevation, and perfection, see now that you overlook not the great necessity of it in yourselves, where one would think, as it doth most nearly concern you, so it should be most easy to you to perceive it. No part of nature is so deplorably vitiated as the soul of man, except the devil's. This was thy case that readest these words, as well as mine and all men's else; and if thou art not restored by renewing grace, it is thy case still; it is Satan's business to keep thee from observing it, lest the knowledge of thy misery should waken thee to accept and mind the cure. If he can make thee forget it, or deceive thee by flatterers, and by a seeming formal outside religiousness, and quiet thee in thy misery, till there be no remedy, but time is past, and mercy gone, then is he the conqueror, and hath the prey he aimed at, and thou art lost for ever.

Thy salvation or damnation lieth on thy escaping this deceit, and the presumption, security, and impenitency, that are its consequents. For this end thou hast the plain directions of God's word, the frequent warnings, the close convictions, the fervent exhortations of his ministers. If the Spirit set in, and these prevail, and thou give up thyself unreservedly to the Lord, thou art a happy man, and hast received the beginning of life eternal. Regeneration must give thee a new nature, suitable to the heavenly doctrines and duties propounded in the holy Scriptures, or else they will seem strange and toilsome things, and thou wilt savour them no more than thy food when thou art sick. Till thou art regenerate, and hast a new heart and spirit, thou wilt still disrelish those saving truths that call thee higher, and put thee upon self-denial and a

holy life, especially when they are closely applied to thee for these ends. Thou wilt disrelish all spiritual prayers and conference, especially when they discover and condemn thy unsanctified carnal state; and thou wilt secretly or openly have a malignant distaste or opposition against the regenerate, that live by that renewing sanctifying Spirit to which thou art a stranger, and wilt look on them as a people that condemn thee by their lives, unless thou canst cheat thyself into a persuasion that they are but a company of singular, proud, self-conceited people, and really no otherwise regenerate than thyself. And all the religion, and wisdom, and good carriage which thou hast, without this spiritual change, may easily be thy delusion, but will never serve for thy salvation; yea, heaven itself would be to thee no heaven if it were set open to thee, and thou hadst not the heavenly nature to suit to the heavenly employment and felicity. This is the business of a converting and confirming ministry, and of the Spirit and grace that works by them; and this is the business that above other businesses lieth upon thee in this present world, even to work now in thy soul that holy love to the most blessed God, who is love itself, which may cause thee here to thirst after his presence, and to seek his favour, and to do his will, and may fit thee delightfully for ever to enjoy him, and everlastingly to be solaced in the beholding of his glory, in the feeling of his love, and in his heavenly praises and the fulfilling of his will. An unregenerate, unholy soul is as unfit for this as thy mortal enemy to lie in thy bosom, or as toads and serpents to be the familiar companions of men, or as the ox or ass is to feed with thee at thy table, and lie with thee in thy bed. Employments and enjoyments must have a suitable nature; if the Spirit fit thee not here for heaven, in this life which is given thee purposely for that end, it is pernicious folly to hope for a heaven for which thy unsanctified nature is unfit, and to promise thyself a felicity of which thou art incapable, and which indeed thy very heart doth hate. Thou lovest not holiness here, nor the very imperfect saints that have it, how much less couldst thou love the infinite holiness of God, who hateth thy sins ten thousand times more than the most severe and sharp reprover hates them? If thy eyes cannot look upon the smallest candle without offence, how then would they endure to look upon the sun, and that in the nearest access unto its glory? And if here thy enmity to the holy will of God be such that thou pleasest not him, and he and his ways are displeasing unto thee, how incapable art thou of heaven, which is a state of mutual full delight, where the saints do perfectly

please the Lord, and are perfectly pleased in him and his pleasure: Rom. viii. 5–8, 'They that are after the flesh do mind (or savour) the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.' And 'that which is born of the flesh is (but) flesh; as that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' John iii. 6. It is therefore undeniable that till you are born of the Spirit, and so made spiritual, all your religion and civility leaveth you but enemies to God, and in a state of rebellion against his will, and consequently in a state of death. Baptism, which is the sacrament of regeneration, doth signify this change, and contain your profession and engagement to the Lord. But if you have not the regeneration of the Spirit as well as of the water, and the answer of a good conscience as well as the washing of the flesh, you differ from heathens and infidels but as covenant-breakers differ from them that never entered into covenant with Christ at all.

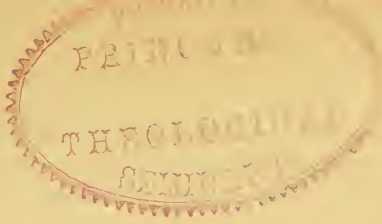
But I must not stand too long instructing you at the door, when my business is to call you in, and to tell you that here is a message to you from the Lord; a treatise of regeneration, the most necessary subject, in a style so clean and close, in words so pertinent, plain, powerful, and pressing, that undoubtedly by a serious, impartial perusal, joined with sober consideration and prayer, thy soul may receive unspeakable commodity. Though I know not the author, I am so far acquainted with the spirit appearing in this discourse, that I dare assure thee he had very much help from heaven, and dare encourage thee to study this savoury treatise, as that which containeth most certain, sound, and necessary doctrine, directly tending to the saving of thy soul, without any tendency to heresy, schism, or uncharitable censoriousness; a doctrine necessary for the learned or unlearned, the rich and the poor, the honourable and the base, and for men of all degrees and ranks; which, if it had been more heartily studied and inculcated in public and in private by all preachers of the gospel, instead of the human inventions, canons, opinions, and interests of their several sects, the church and the consciences of the pastors and their flocks had been now much wholer and sounder than they are. Believe it, whatever thou art, thou shalt never be saved for being a lord, or a knight, or a gentleman, or a rich man, or a learned man, or a well-spoken eloquent man, nor yet for being a Calvinist, or a Lutheran, an

Arminian, an Anabaptist, a Prelatist, a Presbyterian, an Independent, or protestant, formally and merely as such, much less for being a papist, or of any such grossly deluded sect, but as a regenerate Christian it is that thou must be saved, or thou canst have no hope. If once this renewing Spirit have taken possession of thy soul, and thou art made partaker of the divine and heavenly nature, and art become a living member of Christ, thou shalt be saved, though thou know not whether diocesan bishops, metropolitans, primates, and patriarchs, or only parochial bishops, be most agreeable to the mind of God; and though thou know not whether any other book than the Bible should contain the liturgy of the church, and though thou know not in a hundred controversies of the times, about orders, and forms, and ceremonies, and smaller points of doctrine, which party it is that is in the right. Holiness will save thee without the formalities of this party or of that, but formalities will not save thee without holiness.

To you that are regenerate I shall say but this, keep very honourable and thankful thoughts of your spiritual birth; live now as the sons of the eternal God, and as the heirs of everlasting life; set your faces now towards heaven, as those that see the grave at hand, and the vanities of this world all vanishing into smoke, and as those that are resolved to have heaven or nothing. Away with the sins, the baits and company, that formerly were your desire and delight. And seeing even the first hour of your conversion there is joy in heaven before the angels for your sakes, for shame walk not in too much dejectedness and despondency, but keep a harmony and consent with heaven, seeing you are so highly concerned in the matter of their joy. And pray still to the Lord of the harvest that he will mind the forsaken nations of the earth, and continue his kindness to this unworthy island, in sending forth more such labourers into his harvest as this reverend author is here manifest by his works to be; and that he will double his Spirit on the messengers of grace, that with faith they may speak the words of faith, and with life may speak the words of life, and that the immortal seed which is sown by their hand may bring forth many sons to God, and spring up plenteously unto eternal life. And among others remember him than whom scarce any is more obliged to be thankful for the prayers of the saints, even the most unworthy servant of the Lord among them that have found mercy to be faithful,

RICHARD BAXTER.

January 31, 1659.



THE DOOR OF SALVATION OPENED BY THE KEY OF REGENERATION.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. —John iii. 3.

CHAPTER I.

The opening of the words, and the doctrine.

As Isaiah is called the evangelical prophet, because he doth so lively describe and foretel the death of Christ, so John may not unfitly be called the prophetical evangelist; for though in his Epistles he shews himself an apostle, in his Gospel an evangelist, yet in his Revelation he is a prophet. The ancients do aptly ascribe the eagle to him for his ensign; because when the other evangelists begin with the Mediator's incarnation and humanity, proving him to be the Son of man, he doth at first fly out of sight, and beginneth with the Saviour's deity, proving him to be the Son of God. And his whole Gospel indeed is a demonstration of Christ's divinity, which was occasioned, as ecclesiastical historians record, by the heresy of Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied it.

In this third chapter we have, first, Christ teaching Nicodemus, to ver. 21.

Secondly, John's testimony concerning Christ, to the end.

The text is Christ's speech to Nicodemus. Nicodemus had seen Christ's miracles, and thereby was convinced to come unto him; Christ lets him hear his oracles, that thereby he might be converted and come in to him. Nicodemus, in the second verse, had called Christ Rabbi, and confessed him to be a teacher sent from

God; Christ, in pursuance of that office, sets him his lesson, assuring him that he must learn it in the school of earth, or he can never be removed to the university of heaven.

In the words we observe two general parts.

First, An affirmation, or the necessity of regeneration: 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

Secondly, Its confirmation, or the certainty of that assertion: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee.'

In the affirmation we may take notice of two particulars:

1. The universality of the persons: 'A man,' that is, every man; the proposition is indefinite, and so equivalent to one that is universal.

2. The quality of the thing affirmed: 'Be born again;' mending will not serve, the whole man must be new made; *non unius partis correctionem, sed totius naturæ renovationem designat*, saith Calvin; It speaks not the reparation of one part, but the renovation of the whole man.

In the confirmation of it there are likewise two things considerable:

1. The manner of the expression: 'Verily, verily.'

2. The author of it: 'I say unto thee.'

The meaning of the words.

'Verily, verily;'[1] that is, amen, faithfully, truly; the word cometh from the Hebrew *amen*, which signifieth true, faithful. It is used by the people as a ratification of their prayers, and testimony of their desires to be heard, Jer. xi. 5; 1 Cor. xiv. 16. And when it is doubled, as here by the great prophet, it is a vehement asseveration, or strong confirmation of the thing asserted. As if Christ had said, Nicodemus, thou mayest believe me, for truly, assuredly it is so; except thou art a new creature, thou canst never enter into the new Jerusalem. All God's sayings are of equal truth; but to some there is affixed a special note of certainty, because of their extraordinary weight, and man's infidelity. Private soldiers may go with a common pass, but generals and commanders-in-chief have trumpets sounding before them. Verily, verily. All orders and warrants of kings have not their seals annexed, but those that be of greatest weight.

'I say unto thee.'[2] I who am the prophet of my church, the teacher sent from God, the true and faithful witness, 'for whom it

[1] Ἀμὴν, ἀμὴν, *idem est quod* ἀληθῶς, *compara* Mark xiii. 43, *cum* Luke xxi. 3; and Luke ix. 27, *cum* Mark xvi. 18, and Mark ix. 1.

[2] Λέγω σοι.

is impossible to lie,' I deliver thee this doctrine as a certain unquestionable truth, that unless thou hast a new being, it had been better for thee to have had no being, for thou canst never see the kingdom of God.

'Except a man.'[1] Let him pretend never so much, let his performances be never so many, let his privileges be never so great, and his profession never so glorious, yet if he be not born again, all these will do him little good, for he can never see the kingdom of God. The assertion, as I hinted before, is general; as every man is born of the flesh, so every man must be born of the Spirit, or it had been happy for them if they had never been born.

'Be born again.'[2] That is, be renewed, and turned by the Holy Ghost from nature to grace, 'from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God,' Acts xvi. 18. Except a man be inwardly and really altered from what he was, except he becomes a new creature: 'Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 22–24. Except he be turned upside down, and walk antipodes to his former way; except the stream of his heart and life run in another channel, carry him towards another haven, he can never arrive at heaven; except the image of the devil be razed out and defaced, and the image of God be imprinted on him, he can never be saved; except he be thoroughly and universally changed; his understanding by illumination, his will by renovation, his affections by sanctification, and his life by reformation, he can never obtain salvation.

'He cannot see.'[3] That is, enjoy; he cannot have his portion in it, or ever attain the enjoyment of it. *Videre est frui.* Vision in Scripture is frequently put for fruition:[4] as Ps. xxvii. 13; Heb. xii. 4; Isa. iii. 1; Ps. xxxiv. 12; Mat. v. 8.

'The kingdom of God.'[5] God's kingdom is twofold:

1. The kingdom of grace here, Rom. xiv. 17. 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,' Mat. vi. 33.

2. The kingdom of glory hereafter, 1 Thes. ii. 12. Now except a man be born again, he can have no right to the privileges of the kingdom of grace, nor to the possession of the kingdom of glory.

The text being thus briefly explained, I shall glean some few

[1] ἐὰν μὴ τις.
[2] γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν.
[3] οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν.
[4] Drus. animad. lib. ii. cap. 8.
[5] τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

ears by the way, before I come to the full sheaf, which will afford, through the blessing of God, much spiritual food to our souls.

1. *Obs.* That Christ is very willing to instruct them that come to him, notwithstanding their many weaknesses.

Nicodemus was short in his confession of Christ, and faulty in his coming to him only by night; yet the meek Master overlooketh this, and presently falls upon teaching his outward scholar. The tender father doth not turn his weak child out of doors, but lends him his helping hand, whereby he might be enabled to go. As when a soul is in him, he doth not refuse its gold because it wanteth some grains, nor its honey though it be mingled with wax, Cant. v. 1; so when a soul is in the way to him, he doth not reject it for its imperfections, nor twit it with its corruptions, as those flies that love to feed on sores; but as the loving parent beholdeth the prodigal while he is afar off, runneth more than half way to meet him, and as the true turtle chirpeth sweetly, that he may cluck sinners nearer to himself.

2. *Obs.* A man may be a noble, knowing person, and yet ignorant of, and a stranger to, regeneration.

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, either one of the Sanhedrim, or great council, or one of the rulers of their synagogue; one that taught others, and yet was himself untaught in this rudiment, this A B C of Christianity. How childishly doth he talk of this weighty truth! Ver. 4, 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? How deep may a man dive into the mysteries of nature, how sharp-sighted may he be there, and yet as blind as a mole in the things of grace! Nature may in some men be dunged with industry, art, education, and example, and thereby show fair, spread far, and overtop others, but yet manured to the utmost, it is but nature still: its grapes will be the grapes of Sodom, and its clusters the clusters of Gomorrah. The natural man, like Zaccheus, is too low of stature to see Jesus, 'he discerneth not the things of God: neither indeed can he, for they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. The wisest philosophers, that could cunningly pick the lock of nature's cabinet, and behold much of her riches and treasure, were mere idiots and fools in the things of the Spirit, and understood no more of these mysteries of divinity than a cowherd doth of the darkest precepts of astronomy. Water riseth no higher than its fountain; the light within us, or nature, is but a rush candle, and cannot enable us to see the Sun of righteousness; the light without us, or scripture, is the star to the wise men, leading us to the place where the babe

of Bethlehem lieth. As the eye without the optic virtue is but a dead member, so all human wisdom without divine inspiration is but learned folly and elaborate wickedness.

3. *Obs.* That regeneration is one principal thing which pastors ought to instruct their people in.

Jesus Christ, though the wind of Nicodemus' words, ver. 2, seemed to blow towards some other coast, yet he waives all other discourse, and speaks directly and home to this, as the one doctrine necessary for his unregenerate disciple to learn. Regeneration and salvation by Christ are the two substantial dishes which the faithful stewards of God set constantly before the families committed to their charges. Those that preach notions instead of such doctrines do cursedly cozen their guests with flowers instead of meat, which may fill the eye of the wanton, but not the heart of the hungry soul. Oh what a blessed pattern have we here for our practice, when our parishioners come to us, or we go to them! what more weighty subject can we treat of than their conversion! without which they must be punished with everlasting destruction. Alas, how boundless and endless is that wrath to which they are liable, though their hearts are insensible! therefore though their mouths do not call, yet their misery doth cry aloud to us to instruct them in regeneration, as ever we desire they should escape damnation.

But the doctrine which I principally intend is this:

Doct. That without regeneration men and women can never obtain salvation.

'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' He or she that is not experimentally acquainted with the second birth cannot possibly escape the second death. 'Make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel,' Ezek. xviii. 31. The old heart will unquestionably carry thee to hell—the place of the old serpent. He must have a new spirit that will go to the new Jerusalem. 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God,' Mat. xviii. 2. There must be a change from nature to grace, before there can be a change from grace to glory. Heaven is the father's house, John xiv. 2, provided for none but his children, such as are born of him. A man must be taken out of the wilderness of nature, and planted in Eden, the garden of the Lord, before he can be transplanted into the true paradise.

CHAPTER II.

The description or nature of regeneration in the several causes of it.

For the illustration of this truth, I shall shew, first, what the regeneration or new birth is; and then give you the reasons why none can avoid the second death, unless they are acquainted with the second birth.

For the first, Regeneration is a work of God's Spirit, whereby he doth, out of his mere good pleasure, for his own glory and the salvation of his elect, at first renew the whole man after his own image by the ministry of the word. I shall explain this definition by taking it in pieces, and observing in it the several causes of regeneration. When arras hangings are opened and unfolded, their richness will appear.

First, I call it a work of God's Spirit; here is the efficient principal cause of it. The babe of grace in this respect calleth none on earth father. It is by the Spirit overshadowing the soul that this new creature is conceived and brought forth; godliness is not natural, but adventitious to man; not by propagation, but by donation. Man cannot generate himself naturally, much less regenerate himself spiritually; they which are born of the flesh contribute nothing to their own beings, neither do they which are born of the Spirit bring anything to their new beings, unless it be a passive receptiveness, as they are reasonable creatures. Some read the text, and not unfitly, for the original will fully bear it, 'Except a man be born (*ἄνωθεν, i.e, οὐρανοθεν*) from above,' or from heaven; and therefore in the fifth verse of this third chap. of John, Christ telleth us, 'Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' and in Titus iii. 5, it is called a 'renewing of the Holy Ghost;' so in 1 John iv. 12, 13; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; 2 Cor. iii. 5; 1 Peter i. 1, 2, 3; Eph. ii. 10; 1 Peter ii. 9, 10.

This work is sometimes called a transplanting out of the natural wild olive tree, and ingraffing it, contrary to nature, into a true good olive tree; Rom. xi. 24, out of the first into the second Adam; now the scion cannot transplant or ingraff itself. It is termed a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17. To create or bring something out of nothing is beyond the power of the strongest creature; it is above the strength of all men and angels to create the least pile of grass; God challengeth this as his prerogative royal, Isa. xl. 26. As the old heaven and earth were the work of his hands, Gen. i. 1, so are the

new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, Isa. lxv. 17. Austin truly said, To convert the little world, man, is more than to create the great world. It is further styled a resurrection from the dead, Eph. v. 14, and ii. 5. It is a great work to recover a dying body, a far greater to restore one that is dead to life; but the greatest of all to enliven a dead soul; in the former there is no opposition, in this there is much. In spite of man and devils, to put down the ugly rotten frame of sin, and set up the lovely lasting fabric of sanctity, requireth no less strength than omnipotency. The Almighty God putteth forth the exceeding greatness of his power in forming the new creature, Eph. i. 10–20. Nay, the same power which he did in raising Jesus Christ from the dead, who had, beside the watch of Romans, and the malice of hell, such a heavy weight as the sins of the world to keep him down.

Repentance and faith are the two chief ingredients in this rare composition, and neither of them are such drugs as grow in nature's garden; no, they are fetched from far: It is God that giveth to the Gentiles repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 25. The stones will as soon weep as man's heart of stone, unless he that smote the rock force water out of it, by turning it into a heart of flesh. For faith also, it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8; Phil. i. 29. 'None come to the Son, but such as are drawn by the Father,' John vi. 44. He alone that caused iron to swim, 2 Kings vi. 6, can keep the humbled sinner, that is pressed down with the burden of innumerable iniquities, from sinking in the gulf of desperation.

To part a man from his dearest carnal self, and to make him diligently seek the destruction of what before he sought the preservation; to make him cut off his right hand, and pluck out his right eye, hate father, mother, wife, child, name, house, land; undo all he had done, go backward every step he had gone; see things with a new light, understand things with another heart, and in the whole course of his life to swim against the stream and tide of nature, and winds of example; to bring a soul to this, I say, (which is all done and much more in conversion,) requireth the infinite God's operation: flesh and blood can neither reveal these things to a man, nor work these things in a man, but the Father which is in heaven.

The minister, like the prophet's servant, may lay his staff on the dead child, but he cannot raise it to life till the Master cometh:[1] 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God only can give the increase,' 1 Cor. iii. 6. 'Without him we can do nothing,' John

[1] Instrumentum non movet nisi movetur.

xv. 5. We may preach out our hearts, unless God affords his help, our people will never be holy. As Protogenes, when he saw a picture in a shop curiously drawn, cried out, None but Apelles could do this: so when thou seest the beautiful image of the blessed God lively portrayed on the soul, thou mayest say, This is the finger of God: none but a God could do this.

Secondly, I say, 'Whereby God out of his mere good pleasure,' here is the impulsive or moving cause of regeneration; 'of his own will begat he us again by the word of truth,' James i. 18. God's goodwill is the highest moving cause of this gracious work; it was not any foresight of faith or good works, not anything without him that turned the scale of his thoughts for thy purity and peace, but only his own good pleasure and pity, Ezek. xxxvi. 21, 22; therefore he is said to 'give a new heart,' ver. 26, 27, because he bestoweth it freely, not for man's merit, but for his own mercy: the gift of grace is merely of grace; 'For we ourselves,' saith the apostle, 'were sometimes disobedient, foolish, serving divers lusts and pleasures; but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Titus iii. 3–5; so Eph. ii. 1-6. If you would know the grand reason why some are taken by the net of the word, let down in the sea of the world, when others are left; why some like wax are melted before this fire of Scripture, when others like clay are hardened; why some have the light side of this glorious pillar towards them, when others have the dark side of it; why the same path of the Red Sea is salvation to some, when it is destruction to others; why the 'mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to babes, when they are hid from the wise and prudent:' I must give you the same reason which Christ himself doth, 'Even so, Father, because it seemeth good in thy sight,' Mat xi. 27; his will and mercy are the causes of all our felicity, Rom. ix. 18; 1 Pet. i. 3; Deut. vii. 7, 8. Grace chooseth thee, Rom. xi. 5. 'There is a remnant according to the election of grace,' so Eph. i. 5. Grace calleth, 2 Tim. i. 9; 'Who hath called us according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,' so Gal. i. 15. Grace distinguisheth and differenceth thee from others; 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. Grace justifieth, Rom. iii. 24, 'Being justified freely by his grace.' Grace glorifieth, Eph. ii. 8, 'For by grace are ye saved.' Grace doth lay both the foundation and the topstone of glory: that deserveth the thanks and praise

of our beginning, progress, and perfection in holiness. Every step in our ascent to Mount Sion is freestone; every link, as one observeth well, in the golden chain of man's salvation, is richly enamelled with free grace. Oh how lively doth this lovely attribute play its part from first to last in the recovery of lost man!

Thirdly, here is the instrumental cause. I say, 'by the ministry of the word.' 'Of his own will begat he us again by the word of truth,' James i. 18. Scripture is the ordinary means of conversion; 'The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation,' Rom. i. 16. God indeed is a free agent, working when, in what manner, and by what means he pleaseth; though he tieth us to means, he doth not tie himself to means; he doth sometimes make relations the instruments of regeneration; some by being matched to Christians, have been married to Christ; some matches which have begun in the flesh have ended in the Spirit; therefore the apostle telleth the believing wife, 'she knoweth not but she may save her husband; and the believing husband, he knoweth not but he may save his wife,' 1 Cor. vii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 1. God hath made pious education effectual for children's conversion: the mornings draught of wholesome instruction hath preserved many young ones from infection by, and perdition with others, 2 Tim. iii. 15; Prov. xxii. 6. Some masters have also been spiritual fathers to their servants; there are those that, by being of the family of the faithful, have come to be of the family of faith, Acts x. i; Josh. xxiv. God sometimes converteth by sufferings; affliction, like the shepherd's dog, hath brought those home into the fold of Christ which went astray like lost sheep: God hath cast some Manassehs and prodigals that were hard metal, into some hot fire, and thereby melted them, and fitted them to receive his own impression and image, Luke xv.; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11–13.

But usually the ministry of the word is the pen in the hand of the Holy Ghost, with which he writeth the law of God in the heart. 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,' Ps. xix. 7. It is the incorruptible seed of the word, which by those spiritual husbandmen is thrown into the soil of men's hearts, that, through the influence of the Sun of righteousness and dews of heaven, springeth up in grace and holiness.

1 Pet. i. 23. Ordinarily, there is no other way to beget grace than the word of grace, and it tendeth not the least to God's dishonour; nay, rather the weakness and meanness of the instrument in such cases commendeth the workman, because he hath manifested this to be his pleasure; 'It pleased him through the foolish-

ness of preaching to save them that believe,' 1 Cor. i. 21. He will give light to the world only by the sun, though he could do otherwise; therefore, as some observe, though light were made the first day, yet the sun was not made till the fourth day, to show that God could give light to the world without a sun. Thus God could convey the spiritual light of holiness without the sun of Scripture, but it is his will to make that his ordinary means. It is the word which makes clean the filthy, John xv. 3; which sanctifieth the unholy, John xvii. 17; which begetteth grace in those that were graceless, Acts ii. 37. For this cause it is called the 'ingrafted word,' James i. 21; for as the scion of a good apple grafted into a crab-tree stock doth change the harsh, sour nature of it, and maketh it sweet and pleasant, so the word preached, (for of that he speaketh, ver. 19, 20,) can change the stony, carnal, earthly heart of man, and make it soft, spiritual, and heavenly.

Some have indeed been converted by reading, as Luther, Augustine, Junius, and others confess they were; but most commonly it is by hearing that men's souls come to live, Rom. x. 14. There is a blessing for readers; and there may be a fish or two caught in the net that is let down in a heap, but that is rare: it is not the net lapped up together, but haled out at length and spread all abroad, that bringeth in the draught: so it is the spreading out the word, the dilating on the matter in hand, which usually catcheth souls.

The law, like John Baptist, prepareth the way of the Lord, by opening and searching the festered wounds of the sinner, by making him sensible of his sores, his sins and misery, and heartily desire a physician, a Redeemer, Rom. vii. 9; then the gospel perfecteth a cure, by pouring oil into the wounds, and binding them up, by acquainting the soul with, and interesting him in, the free and rich mercy of God in Christ, 2 Thess. ii. 14. The law, like Moses, bringeth to the borders, but the gospel, like Joshua, leadeth into Canaan. Thus the Scriptures, as is wittily expressed by one, are the bells which ring all in, which call people into the church of God. The poets speak of music which have made stones leap into walls; this word of God hath turned stones into flesh, of stones it hath raised children unto Abraham.

Fourthly, Here is the formal cause of regeneration, whereby God doth at first renew the whole man after his own image; now because this is the cause which doth specially difference a thing, and this being opened, its nature will best appear, I shall speak the more to it, and observe in it these four particulars.

1. The act, *renew*. 2. The subject, *the whole man*. 3. The pattern, *after his own image*. 4. The season or time, *at first*.

1. For the act, I call it a renewing, and so doth the apostle, Tit. iii. 5; Eph. iv. 23, 24, upon a double account; partly because in regeneration nature is not ruined, but rectified. The convert is the same man, but new made. The faculties of his soul are not destroyed, but they are refined; the same viol, but new tuned. Christ gave not the blind man new eyes, but a new sight to the old ones. Christ did not give Lazarus a new body, but enliven his old body. So God in conversion doth not bestow a new understanding, but a new light to the old; nor a new soul, but a new life to the old one. The powers of the man are like streams, not dried up, but turned into another channel. The truth is, that man by his fall from God is so exceedingly degenerated and polluted, that repairing and mending will not serve, he must be wholly and thoroughly new made; as the house infected with the leprosy, scraping would not do, it must be pulled down, and new set up; but as when a house pulled down is new set up, we use possibly the same timber and stones, and materials, which were in it before, only they are new squared and polished; what is rotten or amiss in them is pared off, and what is wanting, as several things will be, are added; so when this new building of regeneration is erected, the Spirit of God makes use of the old substantial materials—the soul and its faculties, the body and its members—which were in man before, only polisheth and purifieth them, and squareth them according to the rule of God's word; it hews off what is unsound and sinful, and bestoweth that grace and holiness which is needful. He taketh not away our beings, but the wickedness and crookedness of our beings, and addeth a new gracious beauty which we had not before. We put off the rags of the old man, and put on the robes of the new man, and continue in regard of substance the same men.

Again, I call it a renewing, partly because of the great change which is wrought in a man converted. New things differ much from the old for the better. O how wonderfully doth the new born soul differ from his former self! As Saul, when he received the spirit of courage, became another man, 1 Sam. x. 6, so doth the Christian when he receiveth the Spirit of grace. He is not in sum the same man he was before; he liveth a new life, he walketh in a new way, he steereth his course by a new compass, and towards a new coast. His principle is new, his pattern is new, his practices are new, his projects are new, all is new. He ravels out all he had wove before, and employeth himself wholly about another work.

What a change is there when the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the dead live, when the lion is turned into a lamb, darkness into light, sickness into health!—why, all this, and more, is done in regeneration, when a sinner is changed into a saint. It is therefore most fitly called conversion, Acts xv. 3, which is a term borrowed from travellers, who being out of their way, turn about, and so get into it, leaving the way in which they were, and taking another, if need be, quite contrary to it. The sinner is born with his heart and face towards the flesh, the world, and hell, and with his back towards God, holiness, and heaven; and so he goeth on many years, possibly till God convert him, and turn him about; then his back is towards the former, his face and heart towards the latter: his whole life before was a departure, every action being a step, from God; his whole life now is a drawing nigh, every duty being a nearer approach to God.

A man and a beast differ much in their lives; but a natural and regenerate person differ far more; even as far as the Spirit of God, which is the principle of a Christian life, differeth from the rational spirit of a man.

Extraordinary and strange things are called new, Act xvii. 19; Jer. xxxi. 22. Well may the convert be called a new creature, the work of conversion making such a wonderful alteration that carnal men admire it; 'they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot,' 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4; nay those that are thus renewed, wonder at themselves, 'being called out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Pet. ii. 9. Woeful darkness makes it wonderful light. As a man that hath been all his days kept in a dark prison and never beheld the sun, when he cometh to be set at liberty, and see the light, he stands amazed, wondering at it.

2. The subject; I call it a renewing of the whole man. As in our first birth, not one part or member is born, but every one; so in our second birth the whole man is new born. By our first birth the whole man is polluted, and therefore by our second birth the whole man must be purified. Original sin defileth the whole man, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet; and regeneration refineth the whole man, soul, body, and spirit, Rom. iii. 13, 14; 1 Thes. v. 23. The plaster must be as broad as the sore; the leaven of grace doth season the whole lump. 'Old things pass away, and behold all things are become new,' 2 Cor. v. 17. The water of life within is not like a spring which ariseth in some parcel of ground, and terminateth in the same, but like the ocean, which compasseth about the whole (little) world of man. As when God's laws were

written in tables of stone, 'the tables were written on both their sides, on the one side and on the other were they written,' Exod. xxxii. 15. The tables were written all over, they were full of the law: so the spiritual tables have the law, the image of God, written on every side, body and soul, every part of each, an inward conformity in the heart, an outward correspondency in the life.

In the new creature, though every part be not throughout sanctified, yet he is sanctified in every part throughout; he hath a perfection of parts, though not of degrees.

Regeneration, like the sun, goeth through the twelve signs of the zodiac; there is nothing hid from the heat thereof; it moveth in, and worketh upon, every faculty of the soul and every member of the body. But the image of God is principally in the soul, or the inner man, Heb. viii. 10; Rom. vii. 22; Eph. iv. 23. As the heart, being the forge of the spirits, is the chief seat of a natural, so also of a spiritual life. The king's daughter is most glorious within, (though her clothing without be likewise of wrought gold,) there Satan before had his throne. It was as a child's pocket full of trash, or as a ditch full of mud and dirt. But now Christ will make that place the seat of his empire, and fill it like a cabinet with precious jewels; and indeed the soul, being spiritual, is principally capable of his image, who is a spirit.

I shall shew how the soul in its faculties, and the body in its members, are both renewed.

In the soul I shall consider,

1. The understanding, to which the Spirit of God makes its approach in the first place, enlightening it in the knowledge of sin and the Saviour, Eph. iv. 23. The understanding to a man is as a window to a house, which, before being continually shut, and little light appearing, it was no wonder that the heart lay so sluttishly, and was so full of the deeds of darkness; but now God reneweth the soul in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Col. iii. 10. Before, the god of this world had blinded the mind that it could see neither the emptiness of the world, nor the preciousness of the word, nor the loathsomeness of sin, nor the loveliness of the Saviour, nor the vanity of the creature, nor the excellency of the divine nature; but whereas the man was blind before, now he seeth; being made spiritual, he judgeth all things, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. He judgeth the things of heaven to be far better than the things of earth, the concernments of his soul much more worth than the concernments of his body, and the affairs of eternity far more precious than the rattles and trifles of time, and all by reason

of the new sight bestowed on him. Satan truly carrieth men hoodwinked to hell, as higglers carry their fowls in dorsers to the city, where they are killed, that they cannot see one foot of the way; neither know they whither they are going, but God doth not carry men blindfold to bliss; but as in the old, so in the new creation, he beginneth with light.

The understanding in regeneration is illuminated to see two things especially: sin to be the greatest evil, and God in Christ to be the greatest good; and I verily believe the mistake of the man before about these two things was a principal cause of the many miscarriages in his heart and life. Before he looked on sin through the devil's spectacles, and beheld that strumpet dressed in her gaudy attire of pleasure and profit, whereby she was to him as the forbidden fruit to Eve, pleasant to the eyes; but now he beholdeth sin through the glass of the law, (in its opposition to the blessed God and his own happiness,) stript naked of all those counterfeit and borrowed ornaments; and it is the evil of evils, sinful sin indeed. He judgeth it worse than diseases or disgraces, than losses or crosses, yea, than serpents or devils, Rom. vii. 13; Heb. xi. 25; Dan. iii. 17 and vi. 10. Formerly he saw no such hurt in sin that professors were so shy of it, and preachers so hot against it, that the Son of God must die, and the greatest part of the world be damned for it; but now he hath other thoughts of it, for he seeth its contrariety to the Lord and his precepts, and subscribeth unfeignedly to the righteousness of the law. Before he saw little desirableness in the infinitely amiable God; 'he saw no form nor comeliness in him, that when he beheld him he should desire him,' Isa. liii. He wondered what made others so much in love with him; his voice was to a Christian, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost thus follow hard after him,' forsake all for him, dedicate thyself wholly to him; that thou prayest so fervently, hearest so diligently, servest him so cheerfully, art so careful to please him, so fearful of offending him? He judgeth him happier that had plenty of the creature, than him that had God in Christ for his portion; but now his mind is enlightened to 'know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,' John xvii. 3. He seeth such beauty in his being, such equity in his laws, such infinite excellency in the divine nature, such unspeakable felicity in the fruition of his favour through Jesus Christ, that he esteemeth his very life, yea, all that he is worth for this and the other world, as Jacob's in Benjamin, to be bound up in the love and life of God, Ps. lxxiii. 25, and lxiii. 3.

Secondly, The conscience is also renewed; to this faculty the Spirit makes its address in the next place. The conscience of the man naturally was so hard and obdurate, that as ice, through the extremity and continuance of a great frost, you might have driven carts heavy laden over it, and it would not break; though mountains of lust, more heavy than lead, lay upon him, he complained not, Jer. viii. 6. But now his conscience is as the water which hath such a tender film of ice upon it, that yieldeth at the least touch, a small stroke of sin maketh an impression upon it; before it was seared with a red hot iron, 1 Tim. iv. 2, and past feeling, Eph. iv. 17–19; as that member which the chirurgeon intendeth to cut off is so mortified by means applied to it for that end that it feeleth not the saw or instrument which parts it from the body, so the conscience was by custom in sin so cauterised, that it felt not the sword of the Spirit; neither ministry, nor misery, nor miracle, nor mercy could prevail with it; but now it becomes tender and flexible; a little prick with a pin is painful to it; as the eye, it is offended with the smallest dust, 2 Chron. xxii. 19; 'it is void of offence towards God and man,' Acts xxiv. 16. Before, it, like Michaiah to Ahab, never spake good to the man, but frightened him with fears, and terrified him with the pre-apprehensions of his eternal torments; it followed him to bed and board, and dogged him day and night like a sergeant to arrest him, at the suit of the most High, for the vast debts which he owed to the divine Majesty. The man and his conscience were like fire and water, they never met, if the hands of conscience were not tied down by force, but they fought. Like some contentious couple, they were always scolding one with another, and striving for the mastery. The endeavour of conscience was the angel to Balaam to stand in the sinner's way with a drawn sword, and stop him in his cursed course; the care of the sinner was to serve conscience as Herod did the Baptist, even to cut off its head, for having a tongue in it so bold as to check him for his crimes, Heb. ii. 15; Rom. ii. 15; Heb. ix. 14. But now conscience being sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, is purged from dead works; and so being purified, is pacified. The creditor now is satisfied by the payment which the surety hath made, and thereby the debtor is discharged. Conscience now waits on the Christian, not as a sergeant to molest him, but as a servant to assist him to its utmost power. The convert and his conscience are now like two in concert that keep tune and time together, or as some loving husbands and wives who strive most which shall please the other best. Conscience strives to please the Christian

by asking the law at God's lips, and making Scripture its counsellor; the Christian strives to please his conscience by yielding hearty subjection to its holy counsels, Heb. ix. 14; 1 Tim. i. 5; Rom. v. 1. The renewed conscience giveth the new creature more solid comfort in one duty than the natural man, though he equal Methuselah's age, hath all his days, Phil. iv. 4.

Thirdly, The will is also renewed: the will before was carnal, crooked, stubborn, rebellious against God and his will, 'the works of the devil he will do,' John viii. 44. 'And as for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not do it,' Jer. xliv. 16. 'It is resolved for evil and against good,' Eph. ii. 3; John v. 40. This is Satan's fort-royal, wherein he continually secures himself in the unregenerate when he is in a skirmish beaten out of the outworks by some sudden conviction; and in this, as Sampson in his hair, his whole strength lieth. Take away will, and you take away hell. But this faculty is now made pliable and flexible to the divine Majesty. It is made so spiritual, regular, and consonant to the will of God, that the convert may safely, if humbly, say with Luther, Lord, let my will be done, because it is thy will. God and the godly man do now as two friends, will and nill the same thing, Ps. xl. 6, 7.

As the will is a servant, it is now cheerfully subject to its Master in heaven. Its voice is, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts ix. 6; and, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,' 1 Sam. iii. Do but shew it your commission from the King of kings for what you require, and it presently doth obey, not dispute your commands.

As a master, for it is a centurion in authority, which hath many at its command; it saith to one faculty, Go, and it goeth; to another, Come, and it cometh; to a third, Do this, and it doth it; it ruleth now according to divine writ, and gives laws to all under it, according to the orders which it receiveth from God its commander-in-chief; were the Christian's power but answerable and equal to his will, he would be as holy on earth as he shall be in heaven, Ps. cxix. 5; Rom. vii. 15, 18, 19.

The iron gate, indeed, of man's will is far from opening of its own accord; the will is hardest won of any faculty; it is like the strong fort of Zion in Jerusalem, which Joshua himself could not surprise; the son of David alone can do it. But the Spirit of God doth powerfully, though sweetly, incline it to choose God, and for God. The understanding discovering to the conscience the necessity, excellency, and benefit of proclaiming and prosecuting an open and

eternal war against all sin, and of accepting and embracing an everlasting covenant with God in Christ, and of submitting to the guidance and government of the spirit; conscience doth in the name of God, whose officer it is, charge the will to close with these things; the will, the Spirit striking in, yieldeth contentedly, and resolveth accordingly; God persuades this Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem.

4. The affections are likewise renewed. The understanding and will, the superior officers, being won, these, like faithful private soldiers, readily follow their leaders, or as dutiful handmaids, they obey the commands of their master and mistress. They are called by some the shapings or formings of the will in several motions, according to the object presented; so that the will, like the sun moving heavenward, these, like sun-flowers, must necessarily follow its motion.

Before, these affections were in several regards full of corruption, but now they are purified for the master's use. Before, they were carried out towards wrong objects, hatred was set upon God, Rom. i. 30; his word, Prov. i. 29; Ps. l. 17; and people, John xv. 19; love was bestowed on sensual delights, Ps. iv. 2; Jer. v. 31; 2 Tim. iii. 2–4; and sin, Micah iii. 2; Prov. i. 22. But now the man loathes what formerly he loved, and loves what formerly he loathed, though sin were the luscious meat which did so exceedingly please his palate, that his teeth were always watering after it, and he rolled it as a sweet morsel under his tongue; yet, now he serves it, as Amnon did Tamar, the hatred wherewith he hates it is far greater than the love wherewith he loved it, Ps. cxix. 104; Rom. vii. 17. He cannot see this knife with which he had cut the throat of his precious soul and dearest Saviour, but his eye affects his heart with sorrow and anger; oh, it is a killing look which he now gives his most beloved lust; he cannot meet this brat of hell, this ugly guest in any room of the house, but his heart riseth against it. And as hateful as God was to him before, Ps. xiv. 2; Rom. viii. 5, 7; yet now he alone is the savoury meat which his soul loveth, Ps. xviii. 1, and lxxiii. 25. If this dish stand on his table, though all others be removed, he hath that dish which he loveth best.

His joy, before in the creatures, is now in Christ, Amos vi. 13; Prov. ii. 14; Rom. v. 2–4; Phil. iv. 4; his sorrow was before for sufferings, but it is now for sin, 2 Cor. vii. 9–11. His fear was before, lest he should lose his flocks, or his friends, or outward mercies; but now it is, lest by sin he should lose God's favour, Ps. iv. 6; Isa. viii. 12, 13.

His desire was before enlarged after gold as hell; but now it is after grace as heaven, Hos. vii. 14; Ps. xlii. 1. Mat. v. 6; Ps. lxiii. 1: 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee,' Isa. xxvi. 8.

Before, the affections were also carried out inordinately after objects that were lawful. The man was like to be drowned in the shallows of lawful enjoyments; when he joyed in the creatures he would overjoy, and turn thereby his mirth into madness; when he loved his relations he would over-love them, and change thereby his love to them into self, or soul hatred. So for his anger, Eph. iv. 26, it would exceed its limits, even where it was lawful. For these passions of the mind are like the water of the sea, useful and profitable if kept within their bounds, but if they overflow the banks, they are very hurtful, and threaten a deluge; but the regenerate person doth moderate and rectify these affections, Col. iii. 1; 1 John ii. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. He keepeth his fire so watchfully, that it doth not burn his house.

Besides, the affections were corrupt before, in regard of the contrariety which is in them. They did torture and tear the child of disobedience; one drawing one way, another plucking him the contrary way; but grace composeth the affections which could never agree one with another; before conversion, hope and fear, joy and grief, humility and resolution, were repugnant to each other; but regeneration makes them good friends; when the new creature's heart leaps with hope of heaven, he is then fullest of fear lest he should displease God; when he is mourning for sin he can rejoice in his Saviour; as the heavens can shine and shower at the same time, he can be meek and fiery as Moses, Num. xii.; humble and resolute as Paul; and yet not, like Rebecca, have two contrary nations struggling within him. The understanding, will, and conscience, are the chief strings in the soul, to which all the rest are tuned; now they being by the Spirit set up to their due height and holiness, the affections are wound up accordingly, and so make a complete harmony of the whole, and yield a grateful sound in the ears of God.

5. The memory is renewed. This master of the rolls, or keeper of the ancient records, was formerly as a grate, suffering the pure and clear water to go through, retaining only the mud and filth; but now it is like a fan, casting away the chaff, and keeping the good corn: it was before as a sieve, letting the fine flour go through, and holding fast the bran; but now it is like the ark, wherein the two tables are safely laid up. The sanctified man's memory is a

spiritual treasury, he layeth up the things of God, as Mary, in his heart, Luke ii. 19, and as occasion serveth, bringeth them forth, and layeth them out in his life; he remembereth the commandments of God to do them, Exod. xx.; Ps. cix. 16.

Indeed, as the rest, so this faculty is renewed but in part; and, therefore, as in the best room a spider may set up her cobweb, in the best garments there will be dust, so in the best memory there may be somewhat which is bad and filthy; but the cleanly Christian no sooner spieth it, but he sweeps it away.

This work of regeneration doth also reach to the body; the strong castle of the soul being taken and sanctified, the town of the body commanded by it presently yieldeth. The wheels and poises being right within, the hand of the dial will go right without. When Satan sat on the throne of the soul, as king, the members of the body, which the Holy Ghost termeth in unregenerate persons 'weapons of unrighteousness,' Rom. vi. 13, were his militia, and employed to defend his unjust title, to execute his ungodly designs, to perform his hellish pleasure, the head to plot, the hands to act, the feet to run, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the tongue to speak for him; but as when an enemy is conquered, and a magazine in war is taken, the general maketh use of those arms and of that ammunition for his service, which before were employed against him; so the strong man Satan being beaten out of his strongholds by Christ the stronger than he, the members of the body which before were instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, are now instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13, 16. The eyes, which before were wanton, open, and full of adultery, 2 Pet. ii. 14, are now locked down fast with a covenant not to look after a maid, Job xxxi. 1: 'They are turned away from beholding vanity,' Ps. cxix. 37. The of ears which before were as deaf as the adder, not hearing the voice the heavenly charmer, do now hearken to what the Lord speaketh; so soon as the wandering sheep is brought home to the fold of Christ, he is known by his ear-mark: 'He heareth Christ's voice, and followeth him,' John x. 27; Ps. lxxxv. 8. The breath and speech, which before were corrupt, stinking, as proceeding from rotten lungs, an unsanctified heart, Rom. iii., is now sweet, seasoned with grace, for the man's inward parts are sound. Anatomists teach us that the heart and tongue hang on one string: 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; for the law of God is in his heart,' Ps. xxxvii. 31; his lips speak the language of Canaan. The sound of the metal discovers it to be silver; his very speech bewrayeth him, as they said of Peter, Mat.

xxvi. 73, to belong to Jesus. His feet before made haste to shed blood, they ran to evil, were the devil's legacy to go on his errands, Rom. iii. 15; Prov. i. 16; but now they are turned to God's testimonies, they run the way of God's commandments, Ps. cxix. 1, 59. His hands before were full of oppression, violence, bribery, and extortion, Ps. xxvi. 10; Prov. vi. 17; Satan's servants, to make up that work which he cut out, but now they are lifted up to God's law and word. Thus in their places are all the faculties of the soul and members of the body obedient to God's precepts and serviceable to his will.

Thirdly, I observe in this formal cause, the pattern, it is a renewing of the whole man *after the image of God.* Man's loss and misery by his fall consisteth in these two things: 1. He lost God's image and likeness; 2. God's favour and love. Now that the second Adam might recover us to God's love, he doth imprint on us God's image; for likeness is the ground of love. Therefore the regenerate are said to be partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4, and the new man, which they put on in conversion, is said to be after God, and after the image of him that created them, Eph. iv. 23; Col. iii. 10; the law of God is written in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10; which law is nothing but a conformity or likeness to the nature and will of the Lord. The corrupt image of Satan and the old Adam is defaced; therefore it is called a putting off the old man, Col. iii. 9: Eph. iv. 23; the pure image of God is introduced, therefore it is called a putting on the new man, Eph. iv. 24; which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; and a being holy as God is holy, 1 Pet. i. 14–16. And, indeed, all these newborn children do, so far as they are regenerate, completely resemble their Father. Their godliness is nothing but god-likeness, a beam of the divine glory, a representation of God's own perfections. As the wax bears the image of the seal, and the glass of the face, so doth the new creature bear the image of his Creator. David was a man after God's own heart, because a man in some measure after God's own holiness.

Fourthly, I observe, in this formal cause, the season. I say it is the work of God's Spirit, whereby he doth *at first* renew the whole man after his own image. These words *at first* do distinguish regeneration from sanctification. Sanctification is a constant, progressive renewing of the whole man, whereby the new creature doth daily more and more die unto sin and live unto God. Regeneration is the birth, sanctification is the growth of this babe of grace. In regeneration, the sun of holiness rises; in sanctification it

keepeth its course, and shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. The former is a specifical change from nature to grace, Eph. v. 8; the latter is a gradual change from one degree of grace to another, Ps. lxxxiv. 7, whereby the Christian goeth from strength to strength till he appear before God in Sion. As creation and preservation differ, so do conversion and sanctification. Creation is the production of something out of nothing. Preservation is a continued creation, or creation every moment in a new edition. Conversion is a new creation, 2 Cor. v. 17—the making of new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; sanctification is a continued conversion, or conversion every moment in a newer and more correct edition. Thus much for the formal cause of regeneration—a renewing of the whole man at first after God's image.

Fifthly, Here is in the definition the final causes of regeneration, the glory of God and the salvation of his elect. The first is the more, the other the less principal end. They are both joined together in God's decree and intention, and in the saints' calling, and the execution of his decree. 'The Lord made all things for himself,' Prov. xvi. 3, but especially the new creation: that being his masterpiece and choice work, is particularly designed for the credit of the workman: 'All thy works shall praise thee, O God, and thy saints shall bless thee,' Ps. cxlv. 10. All God's works do praise him, even earth, and heavens, and brutes, analogically, after a manner, by serving him in their places and stations, and giving others matter and occasion of praising him. Sinners may praise him formally after a manner, as trumpets make a loud noise, but are filled only with wind; but saints only can praise him properly after his manner, in such a way as he accepteth. Praise is the highest, the most excellent part of divine worship. Now, 'excellent speech becometh not a fool,' Prov. xvii. 7, as every sinner is; 'but praise is comely for the upright,' Ps. xxxiii. 1. The water of saints' praises is drawn out of a deep spring, the heart, and so it is sweet and pleasant. This is God's great end in sowing the precious seed of grace, that he might reap a crop of glory: Acts xv. 14, 'God did at first visit the Gentiles, and take out of them (mark!) a people for his name.' He makes them partakers of his nature, that they might be a people for his name. So Isa. xliii. 21: 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.' God formed all the people in the world for himself, for his own praise. Even a Pharaoh is created and advanced, that God might be exalted, Rom. ix. 17. But this regenerated people is the people which God principally designeth for his own praise. 'This

people I have formed for myself'—other people I have passed by like old pieces of metal, leaving them in their dust and rust; but this people I have thrown into the fire of my word, have cast them anew, and made them vessels of gold, meet for my own service and glory—'they shall shew forth my praise.' They—alas, others may praise him ignorantly, as the arrow hitteth the mark, but knoweth not its own motion; or forcedly, as he squeezeth confessions from them of his justice and strength when they are under the rod or upon the rack, Exod. ix. 27. And this is no thank to the will of man, but to the power of God, who, like the huntsman, useth the rage of the dogs to his own end, and maketh the wrath of man to praise him, Ps. lxx. 10; or at best they praise him but notionally, and by hearsay, as one born blind may commend the sun, or a stranger the country he never saw. How far short must these come when no creature can do God right, or limn out his vast perfections in their several dimensions! Surely these must do him wrong, and blot his name with the most curious pencil of their most studied praises; but this people shall shew forth my praise.

Alexander would have none draw his picture but Apelles, or cut his statue but Lysippus, because none else had art enough to do it well. Certain it is, none have skill and wisdom to shew forth God's praise, but that people which he formed for that purpose;—this people which have felt the weight of their sins, and smarted with wounds in their souls; this people which have sometimes been terrified under the apprehension of my unspeakable fury, and the expectation of the unquenchable fire; this people that have seen their corruptions in their colours, suffered divine terrors, given themselves over for dead, damned creatures, and then were by bottomless mercy drawn out of the depth of misery, translated out of death and darkness into the kingdom of light and life; this people which I have purchased with the blood of my Son, beautified with the graces of my Spirit, interested in rich promises, entitled to the heavenly possession; this people which have been carried, like the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, into the temple, 2 Kings xx. 12, and seen all the richness and glory thereof, the pleasures and comforts therein, tasting me to be gracious, sitting under my shadow with great delight, solacing their souls with the means of grace, and rejoicing in hope of eternal glory. This people shall praise the greatness of my power, the manifoldness of my wisdom, the sweetness of my love, the sureness of my word, the riches of my mercy, the freeness of my grace, the beauty of my image, the preciousness of my Christ, and all this upon their own knowledge

and experience. O the hosannahs and hallelujahs, the praise, and glory, and honour, and thanks which this people shall give to the Lord, and to the Lamb for ever! The harps of saints are tuned to these songs on earth; but who can conceive what ravishing music they will make in running divisions on these several notes in heaven! Surely, surely, the greatest revenues of praise which come into God's exchequer, are from the hearty acclamations of his sanctified and saved ones. As they receive the choicest mercies, the love of God, the blood of Christ, pardon, peace, grace, glory, so they return the highest praises.

The building of man's body is so stately a structure, the rooms in it so curious, the hangings and furniture so rich and costly, embroidered as with needlework, that the owner of the house hath a considerable rent of honour paid for it. 'I will praise thee,' saith David, 'for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; my substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth,' Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15. The setting up of the new creation, as it is more glorious, the image of God's own perfections, though it be imperfect in this life, the heart of a saint being bespangled, like the heavens, with those glistering stars of graces, and his life being a legible comment on the divine law; so it brings the Author a larger income of honour. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in the godly man's eye, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, 17; 1 Peter i. 3; but when the good work now begun shall be finished, then God's praises shall be perfected. When the foundation of this spiritual temple is laid in this world, they cry, Grace, grace; but when the topstone shall be laid in the other world, then they shall cry, Glory, glory. Blessed are they that dwell in that house, they ever praise him; in that temple doth every one speak of his glory. Therefore the Psalmist observeth that, when the Lord shall build up Zion, then he shall appear in his glory, Ps. cii. 16. While his Church is building, he is glorious; but as the sun under a cloud, not appearing so to the beholders; we can see but little of his infinite beauty because of our weak eyes, and receive but little of his infinite bounty because of our narrow hearts; but when Zion shall be built up in heaven, our eyes shall be strengthened to see the King in his glory, to see him as he is, and the water-pots of our souls enlarged and filled up to the brim with those streams which make glad the city of God; then the Lord shall appear in his glory; then he shall have the honour of all his attributes, the praise of all his providences, and the glory of all his perfections; for then he shall appear in all his royalty,

embroidery, magnificence, and glory. When the saints shall have sailed in the vessel of their Saviour, through the boisterous waters of men's wrath, devils' rage, and the law's curse, and be safely landed in heaven, then God shall have his full price of honour and glory for their freight.

The other end of regeneration, namely, the salvation of the elect, is purposely omitted here, because it will be fully spoken to in the next head—the first reason of the doctrine. So much for the description of regeneration.

CHAPTER III.

The reason why regeneration is necessary in all that will obtain salvation.

In the next place, I shall speak to the reasons why there is a necessity of regeneration in every man that would obtain salvation.

First, Because every man must be prepared for, before he can be admitted into, that holy place. We say in philosophy, nature doth nothing *per saltum;* the ground is prepared for an harvest, by being dunged, ploughed, and sowed; it is as true in this point of divinity; the God of nature will not save a man *per saltum*, nor remove a swine out of a stye, immediately into a dining-room; nor take a sinner reeking in his lusts, and presently invest him with a crown of life; no, the man must be prepared by regeneration or holiness in part, for salvation or holiness which is perfect. The heathen king would not admit virgins to his bed till they had been purified, Esther ii. 12. And surely the King of kings will not receive any into his nearest and dearest embraces, till they are 'cleansed from all pollutions both of flesh and spirit.'

Every man by his first birth is polluted, mere darkness, not receiving the things of God, Eph. v. 8, mere hardness, as unable as a stone to move in the ways of God, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; wholly captivated under the dominion of sin and Satan, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3, and hereby is unprepared for that holy place. The most godly father begetteth an ungodly child: 'Adam begat a son after his own' (not God's) 'image,' Gen. v. 3. The white halegens hatch black young ones. Though the wheat be thrashed, fanned, and parted from the straw and chaff, yet when sowed it bringeth forth wheat both with stalk and husk: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh,' John iii. 5; 'now flesh and blood,' (especially in this depraved sense,) 'cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven,' 1 Cor. xv.

A raker in privies is not fit for a king's presence, but regeneration prepareth the soul, by purifying it, for heaven; it maketh the creature meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. We scald and season vessels with hot water, and thereby fit and prepare them to hold wine, or some precious liquor; so God seasoneth the soul with grace, and thereby prepareth it for glory. Grace and glory differ not specifically but gradually; grace is *ætas infantilis gloriæ*, as learned Davenant calleth it, the infancy of glory; glory is the maturity of full growth of grace, the same state in a higher stature; grace is glory inchoate, glory is grace consummate; therefore as clothes by lighter colours are fitted to receive a deep scarlet dye, so Christians, by grace or regeneration, are prepared for glory and salvation.

The grammar teacheth the scholar to construe and parse, and that fitteth him in time for the university. Regeneration teacheth the Christian what mediate communion with God meaneth, and that fitteth for immediate communion. Regeneration makes us capable of the beatifical vision, Mat. v. 8, not as a mere condition, but as a necessary disposition in the agent towards its object, as the sensitive faculties are required to the act of sensation, as well as sensible objects.

And indeed heaven would not be heaven—that is, a place of happiness—to them which are not fitted for it by holiness. We say of men brought up in the country, that they would not delight in the honours and pleasures of a court, because such things would neither suit their education or dispositions; so men who know no other heaven than to eat, and drink, and sleep, and roar, and revel, and like swine to wallow in the mire of sensual lusts, would never delight in that place of spiritual and angelical pleasures; for it would suit neither their sinful breeding nor sensual natures. If their sore eyes, which are continually running with a rheum of corruption, cannot without pain behold the starlight of holiness in the saints, how can they with any delight see God face to face, and behold that blessed Sun in his eternal noontide of purity and glory? Therefore, as they that are to live in another country are fitted for it by learning the language, customs and carriage of the people in that country, so God will have them who are to live in the heavenly country, learn beforehand the work of the citizens there, namely, how to please, praise, glorify, and enjoy his majesty.

Secondly, Every man must be regenerated or he cannot be saved, because all that attain heaven must be interested in the purchaser

of heaven. Those that go to that place must be united to, and have a part in him that laid down the price; though man may be a possessor of heaven, yet Christ alone was the purchaser of it: 'We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' Heb. x. 19; Acts iv. 12; 1 John ii. 29. He alone is the Jacob's ladder reaching from earth to heaven, by the help of which the Christian may ascend thither; all other deeds of conveyance will be found forged, and all claims made to the undefiled inheritance which are not under him are false; therefore heaven is called the 'purchased possession,' Eph. i. 14, because bought with the precious blood of Christ; for till a man's person be justified it can never be glorified; the guilt of sin must be removed, or the sinner cannot be saved; the soul must be reconciled to God, and accepted as righteous in his Son, or it can never dwell with God, and be made glorious as his Son.

There are two changes indispensably requisite in all that would be saved. The one is the change of a man's state, or a moral change, when of a bondman to sin and Satan he is made a freeman, John viii. 36, when of a slave to the devil he is made the son of God; when he is brought from under the covenant of works, to be under the covenant of grace; when of an enemy to God he is reconciled to him by the death of his Son; when though he were far off, he is made nigh; though he was not beloved, yet now is beloved; though he was a child of wrath, is now a vessel of mercy, John i. 12; Rom. v. 10; Eph. ii. 3; Rom. ix. 23; 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10. The other is the change of a man's nature, or a physical change, when the whole man is renewed after the image of God. The former is relative, this is real; the former is the change of his condition, this of his disposition; the former change is wrought in justification, this in regeneration. Now the change of a man's nature is absolutely necessary, because, till this be wrought, there is no change of a man's state; the person is unjustified while the nature is unsanctified; for though Christ be the purchaser of the pardon of sin, of peace with God, of perseverance in grace, of an inheritance in glory, yet it is only for those that are in him—that is, really united to him: 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,' Rom. viii. 1. A virgin hath no right at all to the honours and treasure of a man, notwithstanding some well-wishes towards him, till she be married to him, and become one flesh with him; so a Christian hath no right at all to the great and good things which are Christ's, till he be married to the Lord Jesus, and become one spirit with him; union is the ground of com-

munion. Probably when the flood came many hung about the ark, but the waves quickly washed them off; those only that were in the ark were saved; thus all that hang only about Christ, the true ark, by a general profession, will be drowned, will be damned when the deluge of wrath cometh; they only that are in him by a real implantation shall be saved. Now saith the apostle, and observe it reader, 'if any man be in Christ he is a new creature,' 2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore regeneration is required, because by it the creature is planted into Christ; regeneration cutteth the man off from his own stock, and grafteth him into the Lord Jesus; regeneration throweth the sinner off from his own bottom, and builds him on the Saviour as a sure foundation. Regeneration is, as it were, the minister which marrieth Christ and the soul together; therein the soul giveth itself unfeignedly to Christ, and Christ giveth himself really to the soul, and thereby the sins and weaknesses of the soul, the wife, become the husband's; and the riches, and righteousness, the home and heaven of Christ, the husband's, become the wife's.

When God converteth a sinner, he sendeth his messenger, as Abraham his steward, to provide a wife for his only Son; the minister, like the servant with Rebecca, treateth with the soul, telling it how infinitely blessed his master's son is; how rich, even the heir of all things; how beautiful, even the fairest of ten thousands, and altogether lovely; how exceedingly this marriage will be for its advantages; upon this, the Spirit striking in, the soul consenteth to take Christ for its lord and husband, and so becometh the spouse of the God of Isaac, and hath heaven entailed on it for a jointure.

CHAPTER IV.

The first use of the doctrine, containing the gross delusion of all unregenerate persons.

I proceed now from the explication to the application of the doctrine, and it may be useful to us several ways.

First, By way of information; if without regeneration men and women can never attain salvation, then it informeth us, in the first place, how gross and how great is the delusion of graceless and irreligious persons. How exceedingly do most sinners cheat and cozen their own souls! Reader, it may be thou art a drunkard, a swearer, a scoffer at godliness, an atheist in thy heart, in

thy soul, and yet thou hopest to get to heaven. O desperate delusion! I tell thee, either this text which I write of, and which is the word of the true and living God, must be false, (which the devil himself is not so great a blasphemer as to think,) or thou art a brand for the unquenchable fire. Do but look into the black list of those that are for utter darkness, and thou mayest read thy very name written there in broad letters, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived,' O soul-cheater; 'neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God,' see Gal. v. 19–21, and vi. 7, 8; Eph. v. 5, 6. Friend, I could name forty texts of Scripture which pass sentence of everlasting condemnation on thy soul, and yet thou thinkest, in despite of God and his word, to be saved. I assure thee, profane wretch, thou comest short of hundreds which shall come short of heaven. Many bid fair, to the eyes of men, by civility, morality, and common grace, but come not up to the price, to regeneration, and so miss of that place; thou art every day adding sin to sin, drunkenness to thirst, posting in the road to hell, and yet sayest that thou shalt arrive at heaven! Well, within a few days it shall be tried whose words are truest, God's or thine.

But if thou mayest be convinced of thy soul flattery, before it bring thee into endless misery, I shall shew thee the utter impossibility of thy salvation while thou remainest in this condition. There are four gates through which all must go that get into the new Jerusalem, every one of which is shut, locked, barred, and bolted against thee.

1. They that get to heaven must go through the gate of election. As all that were not reckoned by genealogy were put by the priesthood as being polluted, Ezra ii. 62, so all are excluded eternal life whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xx. 15, 'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' Now, this gate of election is shut against profaneness; thou hast not the least ground to imagine that thou art elected whilst thou art unconverted, because God decreed all them to be sanctified whom he decreed to be saved; mark that: 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14, 'Who hath chosen us to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.' The end and the way were both in God's thoughts together. Those whose names are registered in heaven, their natures are regenerated on

earth: 'Whom he did predestinate, them he also called,' Rom. viii. 30. The first rise (saith one) and spring of mercy is election, which breaketh out by effectual calling, and so floweth down in the channels of faith and holiness till it loses itself in the ocean of glory. Vocation is the outward expression of God's inward intention to save a sinner, or the first impression of the seal upon the wax; therefore election and vocation are both conjoined, Rev. xvii. 14; nay, the one is put for the other, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, because they are inseparable companions; so that if thy name be written in the book of life, thy nature would be renewed to live a spiritual life, 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 2. Therefore, reader, if ever thou reachest heaven in this estate of unholiness, thou must make a blot not only in the Bible, but in the book of life.

2. All that go to heaven must go through the gate of Christ's passion: 'There is no name under heaven given among men by which we may be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ,' Acts iv. 12. And it is the death of Christ which purchaseth eternal life for Christians; as the sown seed by dying bringeth forth a plentiful increase, so Christ by dying 'bringeth many sons to glory,' John xii. 24; Heb. ii. 10; but this grace is shut against thee, for those for whom Christ purchased glory, for them he purchased grace. The Son of God laid down the same price for both; so that if ever he deliver thee from the condemning power of sin, he will deliver thee from the commanding power of sin: Tit. ii. 14, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;' so Luke i. 71, 72, 74, 75; Ephes. v. 25, 26, 'He gave himself for his church,' (observe the end,) 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it.' He died for sin, that all his might die to sin, John xvii. 19. He poured out his heart-blood that God might pour down his holy Spirit. 'His name is called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins,' Matt. i. 21, not only from the punishment, but also from the power of their sins. Now, canst thou think, O atheist! to make Christ a half Saviour, as the Papists do, a purchaser of pardon, but not of purity? then questionless thou canst be but half-saved, and have the greatest part of thy misery still upon thee, to wit, thy slavery to sin. But surely thou canst not think, that when justification and sanctification are joined together in the purpose of the Father, and the purchase of the Son, it shall be in thy power to part them asunder.

3. A third gate through which all must go that get to heaven is the gate of Scripture. The promises are the gracious deeds and

evidences which saints have to show for their right to that glorious inheritance; and it is cursed presumption to expect heaven without a promise. Now God hath in many places excluded thee, but in no place promised heaven to thee. Look from the beginning to the end of the Bible, and thou shalt not find one good word spoken to thee; there are woes and curses, threatenings and judgments, which thou mayest challenge as thy part and portion, but no promise or saving blessing.

All the promises of salvation are conditional, Matt. v. 8, 11, 28; John iii. 16; yea, including and expressing this very condition of conversion. 'He that believeth shall be saved,' saith God, Mark xvi. 16. 'And repent, that your sins may be blotted out,' Acts. iii. 19. The body and soul do specifically constitute the whole new man, and upon those two hinges of faith and repentance do all the saving promises in the Bible hang; therefore thy expectance of the promise, without the performance of the condition, is soul-damning delusion; thou mayest like a dog snatch at the children's bread, the promise, but assure thyself, 'thou hast no lot nor part in these matters.'

This, reader, is the difference betwixt presuming and believing; he that believeth, finding in his own soul the conditions mentioned in the promises of eternal life—as, namely, that he walks after the spirit, mortifieth the deeds of the flesh, hath his conversation in heaven, Rom. viii. 1, Phil. iii. 19, and the like—relieth on Christ for pardon and life, upon the warrant and security of his word and promise, Psal. cxix. 114, 145. He that presumeth, looketh that God should perform his part in giving salvation, but never mindeth whether he perform his part of the promise in observing the condition. Let thy conscience be judge whether thou art not such a presumptuous person, and therefore dost in vain look for the fruit of the promise.

4. All that get to heaven must go through the gate of mediate communion. Heaven must be nigh thee before thou canst be in heaven; it is fellowship with God in this world which fitteth for fellowship with God in the other world: 'Without holiness none shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14. Because without holiness none *can* see God; an unholy mind cannot behold him, an unholy will cannot enjoy him, unholy affections cannot delight in him. An unholy man in heaven could not find it a place of happiness, for it is not a Turkish paradise, but a place of holy pleasures; it is mediate communion which doth capacitate the soul for immediate communion; and as the weaker eyes may behold the sun in its beams, then in

its glorious body at the highest in a clear day, so a smaller degree of holiness will enable the soul to see God in the glass of his ordinances, then to see him face to face. Now, thou canst not enjoy him in this imperfect degree, much less in a state of perfection: 'If thou sayest that thou hast fellowship with him, and walkest in darkness, thou liest,' 1 John i. 6. Mark: if thou sayest that thou enjoyest fellowship with God, and leadest a sinful life, thou tellest a broad lie; all that enjoy the ordinances of God do not enjoy the God of ordinances; all that go to church do not meet with Christ: 'What communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?' Truly no more hath God with thy soul. Princes are not so prodigal of their intimate friendship and favour as to throw them away upon their foes. Thy carnal mind is enmity against God; God is a professed enemy to thee, and therefore can they ever walk together till they be agreed? Now, there is a necessity of walking with him before thou canst be translated to him, Gen. v. 21, or else thou hast found out a nearer way to heaven than the children of God went in.

Besides, the Scripture speaketh plainly, that he who hath a true hope of heaven 'doth purify himself as God is pure,' 1 John iii. 3. True hope begetteth and increaseth holiness. Now, doth thy hope cause thee to purify thyself, when, like an infant, thou pollutest thyself, liest contentedly in thy filth, and never mindest cleansing?

Now tell me, reader, whether thou dost not sadly cozen thyself in dreaming of salvation without regeneration, when God predestinated all to be conformable to the image of his Son in glory, Rom. viii. 29; when Jesus Christ suffered not only to procure pardon, but, for all his, freedom from the power of sin; when the promises of the gospel do express regeneration as the indispensable qualification of all that shall be saved, Acts iii. 19; and when thou art so far from being capable of immediate communion hereafter, that it is impossible that thou shouldest in thy carnal estate have mediate communion with him here? Canst thou continue in thy thoughts that heaven shall be open to thee, when the hand of Almighty God hath shut it against thee, and blocked up every way which leads to it to keep thee out? and how deceitfully and desperately wicked is thy heart to promise thee, if thou wilt serve sin and the world, the beautiful Rachel of heaven, when, after all thy slavery to thy lusts, thou shalt be put off with the blear-eyed Leah of hell! Believe not, O reader, the wicked one, if thou lovest the life of thy soul; he may by his lying spirit in thy heart, as

sometimes in the mouth of Ahab's false prophets, persuade thee to go on in thy sinful courses, and promise thee, as he did Ahab, that thou shalt prosper; but if thou dost not perish if thou followest such counsel, the Lord hath not spoken in his word. I tell thee, man, God hath no birthrights for such profane Esaus, nor inheritances for such scoffing Ishmaels; 'depart from me,' will be the doom of all that are 'workers of iniquity,' Matt. vii. 23. 'Into heaven can in no wise enter anything that is unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27. The earth may bear such wicked ones a while, though not without groans to be eased of such burdens, Rom. viii. 22, but heaven will never be pestered with them.

If thou didst travel towards the west, thy reason would tell thee there was no possibility of arriving at the east without turning about; yet thou goest in the broad way to destruction, and thy religion bids thee not to expect heaven without conversion. Well, see what God saith to thee, and be confident that what he speaketh he will do: Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the word of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' O look to it, friend, before it be too late, otherwise this rock of presumption will split thee eternally; for Christ himself hath said that, 'except thou art born again, thou shalt never see the kingdom of God.'

CHAPTER V.

Shewing the insufficiency of ten particulars to speak a Christian's right to heaven.

Secondly, If without regeneration it be impossible to attain salvation, it informeth us of the insufficiency of several things to speak a man's right to felicity. For this is a certain truth, that whatsoever cometh short of this new birth, or whatsoever may happen to, or be in a man unregenerate, that is a false evidence for our title to the undefiled inheritance, because regeneration is absolutely necessary.

Now, there are nine or ten sandy foundations which many build

their hopes upon, all which come short of regeneration, (though most of them are good things, for I speak not against them, but against resting in them as infallible signs of sincerity,) and therefore, when the storm of death cometh, they will fail, and then the house of their hopes will fall to the ground.

First, Civil practices are but a slender evidence of thy right to the holy place. Civility is commendable, but without sanctity it is not sufficient. A mere civil and sanctified man differ as much as a lifeless picture and a living person. Thou mayest make a fair show in the flesh, and be wholly a stranger to this life after the Spirit. Paul was one of the strictest of the Pharisees, concerning the righteousness of the law blameless, even then when he was out of zeal persecuting the church, and in an unregenerate estate, Phil. iii. 6. Those foolish persons that were denied entrance into the purchased possession were virgins; they walked innocently and inoffensively, and had not defiled their garments with gross pollutions, but yet were unconverted, having (though some in their lamps) no oil in their vessels, Mat. xxv. 1, and therefore were excluded the inheritance of the saints in light.

The young rich man who came to Christ and told him that he had kept all the commandments from his youth, Mark x. 20, probably had done much as to the outward meaning of the law and to the outward motions of his life; for Jesus, beholding him, loved him, ver. 21; and yet the man, notwithstanding his specious actions, had unsanctified affections, otherwise he would never have run from Christ as heavily as he came to him hastily, and put his corruptible silver into the scales with, and suffered it to weigh down, the incomparable Saviour, ver. 22; the Pharisee that boasted so much of himself was likely guiltless of scandalous sins: Luke xviii. 11, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.' His religion, as usually the civilian's, consisted in negatives; he thought all was well because he could say he was no fornicator, no cheater of men; but he might have added that he was no believer, no child of God; for all his fair pretences and splendid practices he was both an unjust and unsanctified person, ver. 14.

How often doth sin reign in the inward when it doth not rage in the outward man! A king is as truly a king in his bed-chamber and closet in secret as in his parliament robes or on his throne in public. Now, where sin hath dominion, there the man or woman is in a carnal condition, Rom. vi. 17.

How did vice domineer in the hearts of the heathen, when nothing

but virtue appeared in their faces! Pride in Diogenes, saith one, was but put up in a sloven's case when he trampled on Plato's carpets; and that renowned Curius, that supped on roots, had ambition for his sauce. Civility may arise from education, example, shame, or fear; but as neither of these is physic strong enough to purge out corruption, but as weak remedies use to do, so these lenitives give more mastery to the disease.

Among beasts there are harmless lambs as well as hurtful lions; among birds there are innocent doves as well as ravenous vultures; and yet they have all the same specifical nature of brutes. Among men some have better nurture, and (possibly from thence) better natures than others; some are churlish and cruel, others courteous and civil; some mild and morally righteous, others mad and desperately outrageous; and yet all may flow from the same human nature. As the same earth is in some plants bitter, in others sweet, in both earthly; so the same human nature may be in some more pleasing, in others more poisonous, in both but human, neither being partaker of the divine nature. Some are like swine in a fair meadow, more cleanly; others wallowing in the mire, more dirty; and both swine. Our civil law saith of mixed beasts, elephants and camels, that they do the work of tame beasts, but have the nature of wild ones. Such are our mere civil men; their nature is wild though their actions are tame. The bear, as is reported, bringeth forth most ugly and misshapen whelps, but by licking them, brings them to a better form; yet they are bears still. Thus all men are ugly and notoriously vile by their births, all full of wickedness as the ocean is of waters; good breeding, learning, living among them that are godly, may lick them fair and civil, and put them into a better form, and yet still they may remain unsanctified. The lions which spared Daniel were lions still, as appeared by their devouring others, though God did restrain them a while for the safety of his servant. A water-course may be dammed up or stopped by a bank, though at the same time it hath a violent inclination to run over. I have sometime thought that a mere civil man is like a Capuchin friar, that starteth back at the sight of money, as if it were a snake or serpent, but carrieth a boy along with him that takes all which the demure friar refuseth, and complains neither of colour nor weight; so the civil man in his life starts back from sin, as if he durst not touch that venomous creature, but he carrieth a heart along with him that receiveth in all, (having no porter to examine who goeth in or out,) and without complaining either of colour or weight.

Reader, it may be thou art no drunkard, no swearer, no scoffer at godliness, no adulterer, no liar. I wish we had more that came so far towards heaven. But take heed of resting here; thou mayest be able to say all this and much more, and yet in thee, as in the young man, there may be one thing lacking, namely, this new life. He that went to make his picture stand alone saw at last his mistake, and cried out, *Deest aliquid intus*, 'there is something wanting within,' he meant life: so it may be in thee. Believe it, there is a vast difference betwixt restraining and renewing grace; the former may skin over and cover the loathsome sore of sin, when the latter doth search and cure it. Civility, like a black patch, doth hide the wound; but sanctity, like a plaster, doth both hide and heal it. It is possible that thou dost not outwardly abound with the same corruptions which others do, because thou hast not the same temptations. Thy heart may be a vessel full of poisonous liquor, which may remain undiscovered till thou hast a temptation to broach it. Thy lusts may be as great rebels against God, though they lie lurking in the secret trenches of thy heart, and dare not for fear or shame appear in the open field of thy life.

Thy civility is a mercy, and thou art bound to bless God for it. But O take heed of trusting to it as a sure evidence of thy good estate, for certainly it proveth not seldom a more neat and cleanly way to endless and easeless woe.

Secondly, A glorious profession is no infallible evidence of thy right to life. It is good to profess Christianity. Religion is so noble, so bountiful a master, that none need be afraid to be counted her servant. We must confess Christ before men, if we would have Christ to confess us before his Father and the holy angels, Mat. x. 31. He that disowns his colours deserves to be cashiered the camp. But confession of the mouth must be accompanied with conversion of the heart, or it will not save; that is but the shadow, this is the substance of religion. A Christian in name and a Christian in nature do exceedingly differ. The profession and the power of godliness differ, as leaves on a tree and good fruit; a tree that hath fruit will have leaves; a man that hath the power will have a form of godliness; but as some trees, as the ivy, are never without leaves, yet never bear good fruit while they live, so many profess Christ all their days, who never bring forth fruit worthy of repentance and amendment of life. Some defy the devil with their lips who deify him in their lives. There may be gaudy signs at the door, where there is not a drop of good wine in the cellar. Apothecaries' boxes have glorious titles, even when they

are altogether empty. Many Christians in our days are like a curious bubble, smooth and shining without, but nothing save wind within; 'professing that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate,' Tit. i. 16. A man may wear Christ's livery and do the devil's drudgery. Judas called Jesus master, yet betrayed him. Thou mayest, like the Jews, put a crown on Christ's head, a sceptre in his hand, and bow the knee to him as if he were thy king, and yet all be but in mockery; thou mayest crucify and put him to death, for all this, by thy sinful ungodly life. Silver looketh white, and yet draweth black lines; thy profession may be fair when thy practices are foul. Sin is so ugly that it is ashamed of the light, and therefore walks not openly, as Christ, for fear of the people, though for a different reason from his, lest it should fright them from continuing its friend; but as a thief it goeth abroad in the night, and then with vizards and false beards, unwilling to be known who they are, even with a form of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 1–5. A hypocrite, like a bankrupt, the less substance he hath, the more shew he maketh. The ostrich hath great feathers, but cannot fly. Christ compareth him to a tomb, which is without comely, within unsavoury.

Good doth not always appear with the same beauty, being clouded with corruption; so evil doth seldom appear in its native deformity, but like Jezebel, fills up the wrinkles of its face with artificial daubery. When Absalom intended his unnatural rebellion, he pretended religion; he had a vow which he must pay, 2 Sam. xv. 7. When Simeon and Levi designed murder and death to the Shechemites, they hang out devotion for their colours: 'They may not marry their sister to one that was uncircumcised,' Gen. xxxiv. 14. Thus many lead religion about as wandering cheaters do a monstrous woman, whom they no way affect, merely to get money by it, for their own praise or profit, but do not entertain her as their mistress, giving her the power and keys of their hearts.

When religion is in fashion, many will dress themselves by her looking-glass; Joab himself, though a man of blood, will learn her language; see how exactly he speaks in her dialect, 1 Chron. xix. 13. If the Jews prospered, the Samaritans and they were kindred. The rising sun is adored by the Persians. Summer brings in not only herbs and fruits, but butterflies and caterpillars which feed on them, and attire themselves with the livery of the season: so in the prosperous estate of religion many summer birds will wait on her, and court her out of love to her portion, not to her person; but

these like pirates put their vessels into colours of nations which they abhor, not to serve them faithfully, but to rob them the more easily; as Sanballat and Tobiah made show to help, when their aim was to hinder the Jews. And truly such a lamp or blazing profession will quickly go out for want of oil in the vessel, this inward regeneration. Thy rotten house will fall, when these earthly props of treasure of honours which shroud it up, are taken away: like the moon thou mayest shine brightly the former part of the night, but set before morning.

The hare, when she is hotly pursued, betakes herself to some beaten path, not for any love she hath to it, but that there by the scent of passengers she may lose her scent, and take off the dogs: so many profane persons that have robbed the state, being pursued, betake themselves to the church path, not for devotion, but that they might lose the scent of their vileness, and take off their prosecutors.

Thy profession, reader, is one of the weakest foundations imaginable to build upon, for thy practices may every hour give thy profession the lie. The Pope professeth himself the servant of servants, and yet even then 'exalteth himself above all that is called God,' 2 Thes. ii. 4. And he that professeth himself so humble as to do service to the meanest Christian, is yet so proud as to take merit from Christ himself. Every one that is clothed in black is not a scholar, nor every one that wears a sword a soldier; neither is every professor a true and upright believer. Pharnaces sent a crown to Cæsar, when at the same time he rebelled against him; but Cæsar sent back the crown, with this message, Let him return to his obedience first, and then I will accept the crown: thus God will not be graced with our crowns of profession, unless that be crowned with a gracious conversation; 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that in the heart, whose praise is not of men but of God,' Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Thirdly, spiritual privileges are no sure sign that thine eternal estate is safe; we read of them that were 'Israelites, to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever,' Rom. ix. 4, 5; and yet many of them perished notwithstanding all these great privileges. Paul had glorious privileges when he was a graceless person, Phil. iii. 5, 6. Thou mayest enjoy sermons, sacraments, Sabbaths, seasons of grace, the society

of saints, and yet miss at last of salvation. All that are in a family are not children, though they possibly feed at the same table, and lodge in the same chamber. All that enjoy church ministry are not church members; Doeg may set his foot within the house of God as far as David, Judas may partake of the same privileges with the apostles, and yet be a devil; the outward court was larger than the inner; and so God's visible church takes more in than his invisible. Tares may be in the same field with wheat, enjoying the same benefit of the sun, rain, and earth, and yet are tares still. The Jews boasted much that they were Abraham's children, Mat. iii., and yet truth itself tells them that they were of their father the devil, John viii. 44. 'Circumcision is nothing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,' Gal. vi. 15. Where the new creation is wanting, spiritual privileges are but as seals to a blank, and signify little. Regeneration is the figure which is missing; they, as cyphers, stand for nothing.

The voice of many among us now is like to the voice of the Jews heretofore, 1 Sam. iv. 3, in time of their distress: 'Bring us the ark,' say they, 'that that may save us,' when, alas, they were destroyed by the Philistines for all their ark: so thou reader, when conscience frighteth thee, or death comes nigh thee, probably speakest in thy heart, come bring me the ark, that that may save me; bring me the sacrament, that shall save me; thou runnest to thy baptism, to thy Sabbath, to privileges, and thence concludest that thou canst not be condemned; when, alas, thou mayest go to hell-fire for all thy font-water, and to eternal torments though thou hast often been at the Lord's table, Mat. vii. 22. Baptismal water is not even the laver of regeneration; many sit at the Lord's table which do not taste of his supper. All in the church may hear the word of Christ, but few hear Christ in his word. It is ordinary to enjoy the Sabbath of the Lord, but not so to enjoy the Lord of Sabbaths. Outward privileges are of great value in themselves, but like a jewel which some speak of, they lose their virtue if put into a dead man's mouth; they are of no efficacy or benefit to thy soul whilst thou continuest dead in trespasses and sin: unregenerate Israel was to God as Ethiopia, Amos ix. 7, for all their privileges; Gentiles regenerated are called Jews, Gal. vi. 16; and Jews unregenerated are called Gentiles, Amorites, Hittites, Sodomites, Ezek. xvi. 3; Hosea xii. 7; Isa. i. x.

Spiritual privileges always commend God to us, but not us to God. Their abuse will be a dreadful increase of thy damnation, but their bare use will be a pitiful plea for salvation. How many

live all their days under the means of grace, that never get one dram of grace in the use of the means! Corazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, who had the privilege to hear Christ's oracles, and to see his miracles, were sad seals to these truths, Mat. xi.; for they were lighted to the chambers of utter darkness with the torches of ordinances. Rest not in this, reader, for thou mayest be lifted up to heaven in the enjoyment of privileges, and cast down to hell for misimprovement of them. Thou mayest, like the Decii, leap into the gaping gulf at noon-day; or, like the Egyptians, follow the pillar of fire into the deep, and perish; nay, which is saddest of all, as a ship which is sinking, the more it is laden, though it be with silver and gold, the deeper it sinketh: so the higher thy privileges, if thou perishest, the deeper thy perdition. Thou mayest fly like Joab to the altar of privileges, but if thou art unregenerate, he that is greater than Solomon, will pluck thee thence, or slay thee there. The unsuitableness of thy life to the discoveries of his love, doth but tell him to his face that thou art not careful to answer him in his matters; that thou wilt not serve his Son, nor worship the mediator whom he hath set up, and hereby thou dost but (notwithstanding thy preferment) provoke him the more, and cause him, as Nebuchadnezzar the oven, to heat hell seven times hotter: thy privileges, like oil and pitch, will make that fire to scald and scorch the more terribly. Weeds in the garden are sooner plucked up than weeds in the highway. No trees are more surely for the fire than those which are planted in God's own vineyard and bear no fruit.

Fourthly, great gifts and parts will not speak thy right to glory. Edifying gifts and sanctifying grace do abundantly differ. Thou mayest have a clear head, and yet an unclean heart. We read of them that were famous for gifts and parts, and infamous for profaneness; who might preach profitably, and yet were workers of iniquity; who had the gift of casting out devils, and for all that, were cast to devils, Mat. vii. 22, 23. Ministers may, like Noah's carpenters, build an ark to save others, and be drowned, be damned themselves: they may carry a lantern which may enlighten others, while they go in the dark themselves: thou mayest, as a landmark, direct others in the right way, and never set a foot thyself in it. How holily did Balaam prophesy, and yet how hellishly did he practise! surely, like a burning-glass, he hath fired many others by his heavenly language, yet he himself never fired. Many have gifts from God who never have the gift of God, John iv. 10. The raven was an unclean creature, yet she was serviceable to zealous Elijah.

Gifts may be in their eminency where sin is in its predominancy. The toad hath a pearl, say some, in its head, when the whole body is poisonous. The devil can speak excellently: 'We know thee, O thou art the holy One of God;' and 'these are the servants of the most high God.' For natural parts and gifts, questionless he surpasseth all men on earth, and yet he is a devil still. The panther hath a sweet-scented breath, but a rotten heart. It is possible to pray like a saint, to preach like an angel, and yet to practise like a devil. The course of thy life will speak much more for thee than the discourse of thy lips. Though thy gifts be never so great, and thy parts never so glorious; though thou speakest with the tongue of men and angels, and hast not grace——this new birth—thou art like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

Thy parts may flow from nature, not from saving grace. Men, indeed, as blades, are all made of the same metal, yet differ much by means of temper; some are more soft and smooth, more keen and sharp; others more dull and blunt, more stiff and stubborn; for though it be confessed the soul of Solomon, as created and infused, differeth nothing from the soul of Nabal, yet being to work by bodily organs, her actions resemble her instruments. A man cannot make such good letters with a blotting, scragged, as with a good pen. The better the tool is, the better the work is done with it. Some children take more after their parents than others. Though nature hath little to give, yet she deals more bountifully with some than with others.

Now what a gross mistake is this, for thee to take the crabs, which grow in the common hedgerows of nature, to be fruits of the Spirit, as if they grew in God's own nursery! Knowest thou not that the false prophets were admired by men for their parts, and abhorred by God for their impiety?

Friend, thou mayest, like the ten spies, go over the promised land in thy contemplations, view the country, taste the fruit, and commend it highly to others, tell them that the land is good, it floweth with milk and honey, and for all this never enjoy one foot of it. Parts and piety differ specifically. Gifts, like the moon, have some glimmering borrowed light, but no enlivening heat; when grace, like the sun, hath a clearer native light, and a quickening refreshing heat. Men, indeed, like the true mother, may have the dead child of gifts put into their arms, whilst they are asleep in the night of this life, and think that they have the living child of grace; but when they awake in the morning of death, they

will find the contrary. For though thy gifts glister like glow-worms in the dark night of this world, yet, if separated from grace, in the day of the other world they will all vanish and disappear. O then it will be known that one dram of grace is more worth than a world of gifts.

Fifthly, Thy sacred performances are not a sufficient evidence for heaven. Observe, reader, I shall not condemn, nay, I do highly commend thy external obedience to the divine precepts, though thou shouldst be unregenerate, because few come so far. Athanasius wished that all were hypocrites, and that there were none but such as at least resembled saints. It is good to wait at the pool. Christ may come, as he did to the cripple, and heal thy diseased soul. It may be as much worth as thy eternal weal to lie as the blind man did, in Christ's way; he may speak and begin such a spiritual sight in thee, as may end in seeing God as he is. But I am now telling thee, that it is ill trusting to bare duties as signs of thy salvation; for thou mayest mind personal, relative, secret, family, public duties, and yet be unregenerate and perish. He that doth not these things is certainly not good, but he that doth them cannot thence conclude his estate to be gracious.

Thou must do all as to the outside which a saint can do, or thou canst not be an hypocrite—for an hypocrite is the perfect picture of a godly person. Now, because an hypocrite which is unregenerate may go so far, therefore these things are not sure signs of saving grace.

The pharisees gave alms, made long prayers, fasted, (and some of them twice in a week,) and yet you know what Christ saith—that except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, we should not inherit the kingdom of God, Mat. v. 20. They were—some especially—so frequent at their duties towards God, so righteous in their dealings with men to the eyes of others, that the Jews had a common saying, that if but two in the world should be saved, the one should be a scribe, the other a pharisee. And yet, if thou wilt believe the Lord Jesus, he that goes not beyond them both, shall come short of heaven: and the reason is plain—because they were not regenerated. Their practices were seemingly good, but their principles really bad. The tree was corrupt, and therefore could not bring forth good fruit, Mat. vii. 17. The Israelites did seek God daily, saith the prophet; they delighted to know his ways; they asked of him the ordinances of justice, and they delighted in approaching to him, Isa. lviii. 2. They there heard and prayed, and both with seeming delight; nay, they

joined fasting to prayer, ver. 3; further, they add mourning to fasting, Zech. vii. 4, 5. And yet all this was but the face, the shell, the appearance of religion, and thereby of no acceptance with God. If any beast were sacrificed by heathens without an heart, it was accounted ominous to the person for whom it was offered, as in the case of Julian. Now all the sacrifices of hypocrites are without a heart, Isa. xxix. 30.

It is recorded that in a certain island to the southward of Celebes, night by night among the trees do shew themselves swarms of fiery worms, which make a show, and give such light as if all the twigs of the trees were lighted candles, and the place the starry sphere; and yet all this is but an appearance. Truly thus formal persons may seem by their duties both lightsome and fiery, and yet be but a semblance and flourish.

Low, moorish grounds bring forth some coarse grass, but it is from springs from below; when the high meadows bring forth fine grass, being fed with the clouds from above. The hypocrite may bring forth some coarse fruit, (as Egypt from the overflowing of Nilus,) from the earthly springs, and the overflowing of a natural conscience, which will be by no means pacified when duties are omitted; but the regenerate man bringeth forth better fruits: like Canaan, he floweth with milk and honey, being fed with the showers of heaven, and watered with the dews of divine grace.

Thou mayest imitate the actions of a gracious man, yet be without grace; as the ape imitateth the actions of reasonable men, yet is without reason; or as a tragedian acteth the part of a passionate man, but is all the while without passion. Some men have wrought hard at duties, when a naturally enlightened conscience, not God, hath been the master to set them on work. They would, but cannot, neglect duties at so cheap a rate as others, as he said, *Sollicitor nullos esse putare Deos*—I could find in my heart to find there were no God, but could not. As they say of the wolf in the body, if you feed not it, it will feed on you. So if conscience, when its mouth is opened, should not be fed with duty, it would feed on them; and therefore, to keep it from gnawing them, they stop its mouth with performances, though they never do them from a renewed principle. Do not, therefore, reader, hang the weight of thy soul upon such weak wires, since men do so ordinarily take the way of duties no otherwise than Ahaziah did the way of the garden-house, 2 Kings ix. 27, merely for necessity, to escape an enemy that followed him, wherein he was at length pursued and slain.

Remigius, a judge of Lorraine, telleth us how the devil gave some in those parts money which at first appeared to be good coin; but being laid up, and when need was, taken out to be spent, it proved to be nothing but dry leaves. Reader, I wish it may not be so, but it is possible for thee to drive a great trade in duties while thou livest, to hoard up a great heap of those riches, and they may seem to be current coin, good silver, to have the image and stamp of the King of heaven upon it; but when thou comest to die, that thou art to spend it—for then thy works will follow thee, and God will give thee according to thy works—it may then prove but dry leaves, of no worth or profit to thee. Though these unsound bottoms hold out well enough in a fair sea, when they are put to no stress, yet stormy weather will quickly discover their rottenness.

Not a few take up duties because they were educated in such a religious manner, not from any relish or savour which they find in them; and truly, it will be an easy matter to part him and his work who never took any pleasure in it.

The stone for a time may, against its nature, be mounted upward, but when the force of that impressed virtue which moved it is spent, it will fall downward according to its nature. Partridges that are hatched under a hen may walk with her, and answer her call for a time, but anon they fly away, and shew what they are. Reader, I write not these things to dishearten thee from duties, which are the body of religion, but to quicken thee to mind regeneration, which is the soul of it.

Sixthly, The commendation of others, though they be real saints, will not prove thee to be in a state of salvation. The holiest man's confidence of thee is a pitiful evidence that thou shalt be happy. How many have there been in the city who made a great noise, were cried up by their knowing judicious neighbours to be very rich, and to be worth thousands, when on a sudden we have heard of their breaking, and being worse, as we say, than nought. So many, even by them which are godly and discerning, may be counted rich in grace, rich towards God, and on a sudden, either by some temptation, or at their dissolutions, they break, and God takes away from them that they seemed to have. How was good David mistaken in Ahithophel! Surely he thought him God's favourite, otherwise he would never have made him his familiar and bosom friend: 'It was thou, O man, mine equal, my friend, and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company,' Ps. lv. 12–14.

How was Simon Peter deceived in Simon Magus, who believed, wondered at the miracles which were wrought, and was baptized; but notwithstanding that, was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 20.

How was holy Paul mistaken in Demas! 'Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you,' Col. iv. 14; there he ranks him with one that was eminently religious; but Philemon, ver. 24, he puts him before Luke, and calls him his fellow-labourer; yet 2 Tim. iv. 10, which epistle was the last of all Paul's epistles, 'Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced this present world;' he turned, as some write, idol-priest; he followed the chase till he met with the honey, and, Jonathan-like, then left the pursuit.

How much were all the holy apostles deceived in Judas! If Peter, as their mouth, speaks of their faith, Judas is included: John vi. 69, 'We believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.' When he speaks of their good works, Judas is not excepted: 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee,' Mat. xix. 27. Further, when a traitor is mentioned, Judas is not suspected; his carriage was so fair that they were more jealous of their own hearts than of him, Mat. xxvi. 22, and yet he was a traitor, a devil. Infallibility was never annexed to the godly man's choice.

Dædalus made an image that moved itself by art, which made the spectators believe that it had a living principle; the hypocrite may walk so exactly, perform duties so devoutly, that saints may judge such motions to flow from a principle of spiritual life. Because men have the exact resemblance of Christians, therefore godly men, who are charitable abroad and censorious at home, judge them to be true Christians. Now in regard there may be a resemblance of a Christian in external actions, where there is not the essence of Christianity in internal sanctified affections, therefore they, though they sin not, yet sometimes they err in their judgments.

1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7. When Samuel came to Jesse, being sent to anoint a king, and seeth Eliab, a proper handsome person, he presently crieth out, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before me;' but mark what God saith, 'Look not on his countenance, nor the height of his stature, for I have rejected him; for God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.' So when godly men see their neighbours lovely in their lives, civil in their practices, high in their profession, strict in performances, they, according to their duty, say, inwardly at least, surely the Lord's anointed is before him; these are the blessed of

the Lord, anointed to the kingdom of heaven; but God may often answer them, look not on their profession or their performances, for I see their hearts, that they serve not me, but themselves of me.

We read of Zeuxis, the painter, that he drew grapes so to the life, that he deceived the birds, who came flying to them, and pecking at them as if they had been real grapes. Certainly a graceless man may have such a complete form of godliness, that those who are gracious cannot but judge it to be accompanied with the power, when, indeed, it is but the picture. When there was a famine in Samaria, a scarcity of good food, the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung, which might be the quantity of a pint, was sold for five pieces of silver, twelve shillings and sixpence of our money; observe at what a high rate that which was nothing worth was valued at in a famine. Truly so, there is such a scarcity of true godliness, that godly men, who exceedingly long for the advancement of Christ and Christianity in men's hearts and houses, prize and encourage anything that cometh near it, that looketh like it, or hath any tendency towards it: 'But that which is highly esteemed of men may be abominable in the sight of God,' Luke xvi. 15.

Reader, do not thou, as some tradesmen, live altogether on thy credit with others. The most cunning takers of money that are, though they take notice of every piece, are sometimes deceived, and take bad money, such as will never endure the touchstone, for good coin. What a poor comfort will it be to thee, when thou art hungry and naked, that others think and speak that thou art fed and clothed! He that trades highly, and lives wholly upon trust, seldom holds out long; look, therefore, not so much at others' commendation, but at thine own regeneration, for that is it alone which accompanieth salvation. It is a favour that thou dost so walk as to have godly men's good word; but for all that thou mayest be a stranger to this regenerating work, and then it is not the wind of their breaths that can blow thy soul to the haven of bliss.

Seventhly, Thy confidence of thy own good estate is no infallible evidence. The world, as they are mistaken in repentance, taking it to be only a little sorrow for sin, though no aversion from it, or detestation of it, be joined with it; so they are also in the nature of faith, esteeming it to consist in the strength of persuasion, and that whoever can be confident that Christ died for him, and that he shall go to heaven, doth believe unto salvation; whereas the difference between a deceiving and a saving faith, doth not consist in the strength of persuasion, but in the ground of it. Mat. vii. 24–27, the two buildings be of equal height and beauty, the differ-

ence lay in the bottom and foundation. A hypocrite may sail towards heaven with full gale of confidence, nay, the strength of that wind doth overturn the vessel; for were he more dubious, he would be more anxious about his recovery, and so more likely to be saved: 'There is,' (saith the wise man,) 'that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing,' Prov. xiii. 7. That is, there are some that are full of confidence, rich in assurance, that the love of God, the blood of Christ, the undefiled inheritance are theirs, when, indeed, they have not one grain of grace, nor any true ground of their joy and peace, but are very beggars. The apostle Paul speaketh of himself, that he was alive without the law, Rom. vii. 9, even then when he was liable to its curse and lash, he had high thoughts of his present holiness, and great hopes of his future happiness. He was a jolly fellow, cock-a-hoop, taking himself to be somebody; his motto was *Omnia bene*, all is well, when, indeed, every thing was ill, and there was but a step between him and hell; he had much false peace, though he had no true purity: 'His way was right in his own eyes, but the end was the way of death,' Prov. xiv. 12. He was alive without the law; his ignorance was both the mother and nurse of his confidence; just like a blind man, encompassed about with bloody enemies, or in a place full of serpents and poisonous creatures, yet thinks himself safe because he doth not see them. Or as a man in a lethargy, he feels no pain, though he be very near the pangs of death. Christ told the Jews, Ye say God is your Father, but yet have not known him. So these say, God is their Father, Christ is their husband, heaven their home, when they know neither.

As every wicked man's conscience is morally evil, and stained with sin, so many times it is naturally evil, that it doth neither check him, nor judge him for his sin. One main work of conscience is to give evidence either for or against a man; now conscience may bear false witness against its neighbour; the godly man, either through ignorance or misinformation, not judging by a right rule, or not using that rule rightly. And conscience may give in false testimony on the behalf of ungodly men, either through its blindness, sleepiness, security, or searedness. Conscience, by nature, doth flatter the sinner, Deut. xxix. 29. Conscience may be seared, when it is not settled, and asleep when the sinner hath no true rest. Some men serve their consciences as David did Uriah, make it drunk that they may be rid of it; when it hath begun to storm, they speak to it by some carnal diversions, as Christ to the rough sea, Peace, be still; and if then a calm ensue, they are safe. While

the devil, the strong man armed, keeps the house, all is quiet, Luke xi. 12. Conscience having often warned them of their sins and misery, and being still resisted, at last grows weary, and resolveth to give them over to their own ways and woe. These men strongly persuade themselves that all is well, and yet stoutly persist in all that is ill; but they fall from the high turret of presumption into the bottomless gulf of perdition.

The worst men have not seldom the best thoughts of themselves, both as to their present and future estates. How confident was the Pharisee that his condition was safe for the present, Luke xviii. 11, when he was in an estate of wrath; and what assurance had those prophets that they should be admitted into paradise, Mat. vii. 21–23. How boldly did they bounce at the door, but entrance was denied; as the Jews of old spake peremptorily, 'we shall neither see sword or famine,' though God himself hath foretold both, Jer. v. 12; so many now speak presumptuously, they shall neither see law's curse, nor God's wrath, death nor damnation, when God himself hath ensured them to all their conditions: 'They cry, Peace, peace, when sudden desolation is ready to seize on them, as travail on a woman with child; which they cannot escape,' 1 Thes. v. 3. The mirth of these men was never ushered in by godly mourning. Their expectation is raised high, but its foundation is not laid low.

Nero shut up the temple of Janus, *tanquam nullo residuo bello*, as if no relics of war remained, saith Suetonius, when at the same time the empire was at civil war within itself.

How ordinary is it for men whose consciences are past feeling, to brag that God and they are good friends, not knowing when they ever fell out, when at the same time he is at war with them, walks contrary to them, and is preparing for them the instruments of eternal death. Like Agag, to the very hour of execution, they are confident of a pardon, and go with their hearts full of hopes into the very place of despair. They die willingly, as they tell us, and their neighbours commend them, saying, they died like lambs, when rather like Solomon's ox, who goeth to the slaughter, they so died, going to the den of roaring lions, and the place of dragons: 'They had no bands in their deaths,' who were in bondage to the devil, Ps. lxxiii. 4.

As a man that is asleep upon the mast of a ship, he is in a golden dream, and his thoughts upon large revenues, rich treasures, kingdoms and diadems, which he hath already in his own possession; but in that very hour wherein he is solacing himself in his vain imaginations, a storm ariseth, the man is tumbled off the mast and

drowned. Thus many have golden dreams, strong presumptions of their salvation, when, alas! they do but befool themselves, are all the while upon the brink of hell, and are tumbled into it before they are aware.

Reader, look to this likewise, that thou build not on such a weak bottom; for this may happen both to the profane men and to hypocrites. It is said of Pygmalion that he drew a picture so lively that he deceived himself, and taking the picture for a person, fell in love with his own picture. I tell thee thou mayest spin so fine a thread, and weave so curious a web of painted cloth, feigned godliness, that thou mayest deceive thyself, and take it to be fine linen, the righteousness of the saints, and mayest thence gather that thy soul is safe, when in all thou dost thou art unsound. If confidence or not doubting our estates will prove them out of danger, then the ignorant, stupid, seared sinners, must certainly be saved; which the Scriptures flatly deny. Socrates, who lived according to his natural conscience, died with much calmness and confidence, speaking of those who put him to death, that they might kill him, but could not hurt him; yet was without the knowledge of Jesus Christ, in whose name alone is salvation.

Eighthly, To follow the light within thee, or to obey the dictates of a natural conscience, is no sound evidence for heaven. A man may follow the light within him to the chambers of utter darkness. The Jesuit in the Quaker would make this the infallible testimony of a man's uprightness and sincerity, nay, he plucks Christ from his throne, and sets the light within him in his room, making it more than a mark, even the meritorious cause of salvation; but, reader, I shall clearly prove that it is so far from being worthy of our affiance, that it is not so much as an evidence for heaven, because conscience, by nature, is corrupted as much as the other faculties: 'Their minds and consciences,' saith the Holy Ghost, 'are defiled,' Titus i. 15. The nature of conscience is good, but the conscience of nature is evil. It savours not the things of God; it is not purged with the blood of Christ; it is wholly blind in the matters of Christianity; nay, it is a rebel against God. Now if I follow a blind guide, am I ever like to enter in at the strait gate? Is it rational arguing that I am in my prince's favour, because I obey my captain, when he is a traitor?

I do not say that a natural conscience hath no good in it; but I am sure it is in the account of God an evil conscience, opposing and resisting him.

Like an *ignis fatuus*, as pure and perfect a light as the Quakers

make it, it leadeth men out of God's highway into those bogs and quagmires wherein they sink and perish. I question not but the heathens did follow their polluted consciences in their idolatrous practices. And sure I am that Paul might thank his corrupt conscience for persecuting Jesus Christ: 'I verily thought,' (saith he,) 'that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Christ,' Acts xxvi. 9. Mark the words, they are full of weight. Paul's conscience told him it was his duty to suppress Christianity. Was not his obedience to the commands of this conscience a sad sign that he was to be saved? Further, Christ telleth his disciples, John xvi. 2, that they who killed them, should think they did God good service. Observe, here was pure light within men, that made them think that they did God the greatest service in doing his church the greatest disservice! Tertullian tells us that Maximinian, the emperor, esteemed *Christianorum sanguinem diis gratissimam esse victimam:* the blood of Christians to be an acceptable sacrifice to the gods. Is any man so mad as not to think that if such a pilot steer, the ship, by answering to its motion, must needs be cast away?

Saul would out of conscience have slain the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. 2, and broken the covenant which had been sworn to by the Israelites. His conscience was evil, and could not speak his condition to be good; an evil conscience will call bitter sweet, darkness light, evil good. It will leave plain precepts, and walk by extraordinary providences, Isa. xxxvi. 18–20; Jer. l. 7. It preferreth a strong impulsion of its own spirit before that word which is the will of God's Spirit, Isa. iii. 9, 10; it esteemeth a supposed revelation above that Scripture which is undoubtedly of divine inspiration, 2 Pet. i. 19. It placeth often most of its religion in penance, abstinence, and outward acts of mortification, in external signs of humility, will-worship, and neglecting the body, Col. ii. 23, of many of which God may say, as to the Jews: 'Who hath required these things at your hands?' Isa. i. 12. It makes men keep a great stir about cuffs, ribbons, hatbands, as the Pharisees about pots and cups, when their hearts are full of pride and malice, robbing even Christ of the glory of our redemption, and hating Christians for not daring to join in their cursed opinion. Friend, will following such a conscience speak thee to be a true Christian?

Conscience is indeed a rule, but *regula regulata prius quam regulans:* such a rule as must be ruled by God's word before it can be a right rule for our works. To the law and to the testimonies, if conscience speak not according to this word, it is because, though

much pretended, no true light is in it. Scripture is the compass by which conscience must bend its course, or else it will never land its passengers at the desired haven. It is no farther liberty of conscience, but licentiousness, than it is regulated by the Scripture. One office of conscience is magistratical and legislative, to command and give laws to man. We read of the heathen, that in regard of their consciences, 'they were a law to themselves,' Rom. ii. 14. *Conscientia mille reges, mille leges.* But though conscience be a king over the other faculties, yet it is a subject and subordinate to God; and therefore as a deputy-lieutenant, it must command its inferiors, according to the directions which it receiveth from its superior; otherwise, as a king which commands out of his dominions, it is not to be obeyed. God hath indeed given conscience a large commission, it is a deputy-deity in the little world, man. The government of the soul lieth for a great part upon its shoulders.

It hath an universal negative voice, nothing to be done without its assent, Rom. xiv. 2, 23, but not an universal affirmative voice, to enjoin what it pleaseth; when it is regulated by God's law, then, and not till then, it can govern well our hearts and lives.

Bernard saith excellently, 'We must consult with conscience, as also to consult with Scripture; the Bible is the book of life; according to that, the book of our consciences may be copied or corrected. Let us therefore,' saith he, 'compare our book with God's book, lest in the last day our books be found false and faulty, when they come to be examined.'

Copies are no further valid and authentic than they agree with the original; neither is conscience any further to be trusted than it accords with the word of truth; it is an under-officer, and therefore if it waive its commission, and use its power against its prince, it is to be informed, not obeyed. The law natural must be hearkened to, so far as it agreeth with the law moral. It is the greatest idolatry in the world, saith Rev. Mr Rutherford, to make thyself thy idol, and as bad as that Papacy at Rome, to make a pope of thy own conscience. The light of Scripture is infallible, but not so the light of nature; yet how ordinary is it for men in our days, like the men of Shechem, Judges, ix. 36, 49, to fly for shelter to this hold of the idol Berith, and to think themselves safe if they can say the light within them, (they might more truly say the prince of darkness,) moveth them to deny all ordinances, to call Christians devils and limbs of antichrist, to set up a Christ within them, in opposition to that righteousness which he wrought

without them; but as that hold was fired over the Shechemites' heads, and they perished in it, so these men and their consciences, if the Lord do not turn them, shall burn together.

Thou seest now, reader, that men may follow their natural judgments into eternal torments; do not therefore follow conscience blindfold, but first set that watch by the sundial of God's word, for then only it will go true, and according to it thou mayest work.

Ninthly, To join with this or that party, or to hold this or that opinion, is no sure evidence of salvation; all the sign which some have of their sincerity, is their schism and separation from the people of God and public ordinances. They fancy, for indeed it is but a fancy, that to leave the good old way prescribed by Christ, and travelled in by the saints in all ages, and to take a byway over hedge and ditch, found out by themselves, or some others whose persons they have in admiration, is the nearest and surest way to heaven. How many list themselves under the colours of Quakers, or Anabaptists, or Independents, or Episcopal, or Presbyterians, fighting, in expressions at least, against all that are of a different judgment, and being confident of the goodness of their cause, think it impossible for them that are engaged in it to miscarry. Reader, if thou art one of these, I must tell thee, for all this thou mayest be unconverted; whatever thy cause or opinion be, or whoever be the head of thy party or file-leader, if regeneration be not thy banner, and Christ thy captain, thou shalt without question be conquered, and as certainly die an eternal death, as thou livest a natural life.

Creeds do not make Christians; nor are opinions, be they never so new, signs of new affections. Rather *contra;* divisions and side-takings do rather speak a brutish and grazing, as Nebuchadnezzar's, than a gracious heart. How many persons were there in the days of Christ, who differed from others in their principles! The very scribes and pharisees differed in some things, the Essenes differed from them both, the Sadducees from all three, the Herodians from all the former; yea, the difference amongst many of them was so wide, that they could not meet together in divine worship; now how weak had it been for either of these, from their dividing from men on earth, to have inferred their dwelling with God in heaven? When, for aught I know, he must go beyond them all that will be saved, Mat. v. 20.

Thou mayest be of that party which hath the greatest name for purity, and yet when thou diest, not enter into peace. I will, for thy sake, suppose the opinion which thou holdest to be true and

sound, and the party to which thou joinest to be holy and solid, yet neither of these is regeneration. Alas! the new birth doth not consist in a sound head, though it be a mercy if thou holdest the pattern of wholesome words, but in a purified heart; not in siding with the truth, but in being sanctified by the truth.

The five foolish virgins associated with the wise, and yet were unregenerate and wicked. Judas kept company with Christ and his apostles, and joined with them in acts of devotion, and yet was a son of perdition. Vermin crawl among roses, but are without their savour and sweetness. Spiders fasten on rich hangings, yet are full of poison. Dross and gold, smoke and fire, dregs and wine, chaff and corn, are joined together, yet do abundantly differ.

Thou mayest, like the mixed multitude, seem to turn thy back upon Egypt, and embark in the same bottom with the true Israelites, and yet, as they, come short of Canaan.

Tenthly and lastly, Some seeming good affections do not necessarily speak a man's good condition.

Every shining stone is not a diamond, nor is every flashy affection from regeneration. Some say there is no precious stone but hath its counterfeit. I think there is hardly any grace but hath its ape. I will instance in some few affections which thou mayest have, and yet miss heaven.

Thou mayest wonder at the excellency of the word, and yet be a stranger to the efficacy of it: Luke iv. 22, 'All bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.' All wondered at the Saviour, but all were not wounded for their sins. All wondered at his gracious words, but many wanted his gracious work. Ezekiel's sermons were to some of his hearers as lovely songs, and yet they continued impenitent in their sins. Some people nibble at the bait of the preacher's oratory, when their souls are never caught with the hook and authority of Scripture, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Thou mayest be full of joy under the word, and yet be empty of grace. Herod heard John gladly, Mark vi. 20; others received the word with joy, Mat. xiii. 20. Do godly men rejoice in the word of God? Ps. cxix. 110, 111. Truly so may others; they may seem to warm themselves at the same fire with saints, to drink the same heart-cheering wine, and yet their wine is drawn at several taps. The unregenerate man's joy floweth from a common gift or illumination; the regenerate man's joy from special grace or sanctification: 'Thou mayest be enlightened, and taste

the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,' Heb. vi. 4, 5. Mark, an unsanctified man may taste the word of God, and, as cooks taste of their sauces, it pleaseth them, but they spit all out, let nothing down, receive no nourishment from it. The truths of God, and thoughts of heaven, may pass through thee as water through a pipe of lead, leaving only some dew of flashy and washy joy, not soaking into thy heart, as water into the earth, and making thee soft and fruitful. As a poor man in a sleep sometimes thinks that he is highly promoted, sumptuously feasted, exceedingly enriched, and oh how he is delighted with such imaginations! and indeed all that such thoughts produce is only some sudden joy, no alteration in the man, nor resolution to walk answerably to such dignity, for all is but a dream; so thou mayest think sometimes of the excellency of the mercies which God hath promised, of the pure rivers of pleasures which Christ hath purchased; and oh how mayest thou be taken with them, imagining that they belong to thee! but all the effect which they work is only some short joy, no real change, or settled purpose to crucify the flesh, despise the world, and deny self for the hopes of them, for all is but a fancy.

Thy joy may be a say of that which thou wilt not buy, as being loath to go to the price, and a taste of that on which thou shalt never make a full meal. The full bargain may not be driven between God and thy soul, and then thou canst not take this joy as an earnest or in part of payment.

Thou mayest sigh and mourn for thy sins, and yet be unacquainted with godly sorrow. It is not seldom that men hang down their heads like bulrushes, when they are rooted in the mire of pollution.

Possibly under some sharp affliction thou mayest cry out of thy corruptions, as the pig squeaks under the knife. So did Pharaoh; as metals melt in the fire, and harden out of it; but still unregenerate, Exod. ix.

Ahab humbled himself under the threatening of God, but like a fox in a trap he looked sadly, merely to get out; for at the same time he was an enemy to God, and quickly after went up to Ramoth Gilead in defiance of him, 1 Kings xxi. xxii.

It may be thou hast had some pang of conviction, which like a qualm hath come over thy stomach, and made thee sick a little at present, but thou dost, by the strong water of some carnal contentment, settle it again; the bad humours of thy lusts were only stirred, not vomited up. Judas had a great gash in his soul, and

yet not one drop of his bad blood let out. He was tortured at the heart by legal attrition, but not turned into holiness by evangelical contrition; his heart was only battered as lead by the hammer, not bettered, or melted by the fire, to be cast into God's mould, Mat. xxvii.

A vessel of wine is troubled by being removed, but the lees remaining, it retaineth and quickly returneth to its former savour. Some smarting providence, or searching ordinance, may remove and trouble thee for a time, but thy unsanctified heart remaining, thou wilt return to thy former savour; like Moab, thou mayest be settled on thy lees, and not emptied from vessel to vessel, therefore thy taste remaineth, and thy sense is not changed, Jer. xlviii. 11.

There are two words used by the Holy Ghost for repentance *μεταμελεία*, Mat. xxvii. 3, and *μετανοία*, 2 Tim. ii. 25; the former signifieth sorrow for a fault committed, the latter after-wit, a change of the mind, or making wise for the future. The former may be in the unregenerate; but, as they say of Castor and Pollux, if they are divided they are ominous and fatal; so say I of these, if lamenting sins past be not joined with loathing, and leaving sin for the time to come, it is not repentance unto life. Some by their repentance think they get a new privilege to sin; as that Louis of France, who would swear, and then kiss his crucifix; swear again, and kiss it again; and as the drunkard gives himself a vomit, and then he is the fitter and freer to fall to his cups again; thus some men's sorrow is a message sent to heaven, to entreat leave that they may sin; but this is far from the sorrow which is never to be sorrowed for.

Thy sorrow for sin may be forced out of thee, as water out of a still, by the fire of affliction, not come freely from thee, as water out of a spring. Let thy conscience be judge, hadst thou not rather be at thy carnal mirth, than spiritual mourning? Many of the Jews could mourn sadly in their distress, though they were not sanctified; now violent actions will not speak thy natural inclination.

Or thy grief may be like a land-flood, which cannot hold long; for a day thou mayest afflict thy soul, for a day thou mayest hang down thy head like a bulrush, Isa. lviii. A bulrush, whilst the wind bloweth, bendeth downward; but the wind ceasing it percheth up again. Whilst thou art tossed up and down with the boisterous billows, as one not accustomed to the ocean, thou mayest be sea-sick, but when thou art off from the waters, thou art well again.

The vessel of thy soul is always leaking, but that pump of sorrow is not always going.

Thou mayest, like the woman of Tekoah, feign thyself a mourner, 2 Sam. xiv. 2, when in truth thou art none. Thou dost not dive to the bottom of thy heart, as the Indians of the sea for jewels, to fetch thence thy pearly tears; thou criest not to God with thy heart when thou howlest on thy bed, Hosea vii. 14. Thy waters may not be drawn from the deep well of a broken and contrite heart. Every sacrifice thou offerest may be as Ephraim, 'a silly dove without an heart,' Hosea vii. 11.

Thou mayest fear sin, and yet sin may be thy favourite. The vengeance in sin's tail may be frightful to thee, when the venom in its body and nature is not at all distasteful to thee. Like the burnt child thou mayest dread the fire of sin, not because it soots and blacks thee, but because it scorches and burns thee.

There is so much light left still in man's understanding, which is called the candle of the Lord, that he cannot but see a God, and this God clothed with wrath and judgments against sin and sinners; and thence he, though unconverted, may sometimes be full of fear and horror. Caligula used all the art he could to blow out this light, and fortified himself with all the arguments he could get against a deity, but could not accomplish his ends; for as often as it thundered he was miserably affrighted, and would run under a bed. So we read that Felix, a heathen, trembled when Paul reasoned of judgment to come, Acts xxiv. 25. Sin in its doomsday dress, as it is clothed with fire and fury, may be terrible even to the ungodly. And the consideration of this may make them leave many sins, that do not loathe any sin. The mariner throweth overboard those goods in a storm which he wisheth for, and, it may be, gathereth up in a calm. As a man in a fever loveth drink, yea, longeth much for it, yet dares not meddle with it, because it will make him worse. 'The sinners in Zion (saith the prophet) are afraid; fearfulness hath taken hold on hypocrites.' Why, what is the matter? 'Who can dwell in everlasting burnings? who can abide devouring flames?' Isa. xxxiii. 14. Mark, it is not, Who ever abused such an ocean of love? who ever despised such a matchless life? who ever provoked such a gracious Lord? but 'who can dwell in everlasting burnings?' The sting of sin to the unregenerate is punishment, and the sting of punishment to the regenerate is sin, Exod. ix. 28; Hosea xiv. 1. To fear sin, as it bringeth a heavy rod, usually proceeds from nature;

but to fear sin, as it is a wandering from a holy rule, can proceed only from grace.

Truly as Phaltiel parted with his wife Michal, whom Saul had injuriously taken from David and given unto him, so unregenerate men part with their sins. When David came to the crown, he sendeth for Michal. Phaltiel dares not disobey the king, but he brings her on her way weeping, and bemoaning his loss; he looks after her as far as Bahurim; many a sad thought he had for her when she was by force divorced from him.

Thus unregenerate men leave their lusts when they are afraid to keep them, but many a longing heart they have after them, and are not by choice, but constraint, separated from them. As parents, they go to the funeral of those children of their corrupt hearts with no small sorrow. Sickly persons forbear some meats, which they loved dearly, because those meats do not love them; they either feed their diseases, or are hardly digested. Some sinners dare not feed in their actions on some sins, which are as sweet to their affections as the honey and the honeycomb, because they fear that they will rise in their stomachs, and the reckoning will be too heavy for them to pay.

Or possibly thou art entering upon some solemn act of devotion, and upon that account at present forbearest thy corruptions; as some write of serpents, they lay by their poison when they go to drink, and afterwards take it up again. Thou mayest, like Abraham to his servant, bid thy sin stay below, while thou goest up to the mount to worship, Gen. xxii., and when the duty is done return to it again.

Reader, do not rely upon these affections, which thou seest may be in them which are not regenerated: for as the sorcerers seemed to do as much as Moses, but did nothing in reality, so thou mayest seem to do as much as a Christian, when all is but counterfeit. Thy fear of sin may be forced, not flow freely from thee: 'Fearfulness hath taken hold on the hypocrites,' Isa. xxxiii. 14, as a serjeant takes hold on a bad debtor, or an armed man on a coward, being more bold than welcome. Thou mayest fear sin, as the Medes and Persians the Jews, when the fear of the Jews fell upon them, Esther viii. 17, when the presence of this fear is, as Christ's presence is to the devils, a torment to thee, Mat. viii. 29.

Nay, thy fear may be only for a fit, like a mushroom which groweth up in a night and perisheth the next day. The people, when they saw Amasa weltering in his blood in the way, stood still; but he being quickly removed, they went on. When thou thinkest

of others weltering in their soul-blood in hell, or seest the judgments of God upon others, thou mayest be afraid and stand still a little at present; but these thoughts being soon removed, thou mayest go on in the way of thine own heart.

It is reported of Cassander that he trembled at the sight of Alexander's statue when Alexander was dead, and Cassander had gotten possession of Macedonia. The regenerate man, when he seeth with the eye of faith the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the torments of hell, his flesh trembleth for fear of them, and he is afraid of God's righteous judgments, though they are all dead to him, he being not under the law but under grace; but it may be it is the life in them, and their power to hurt thee, which makes thee afraid of them.

Friend, in all these passions thou mayest but, like a stage-player in the robes of a prince, act the part of a Christian, and therefore canst not thence conclude thy right to the revenues of his place. The whole life of a man unregenerate is but an interlude. Regeneration alone can make a man live in good earnest.

Reader, if thou art a civil person, a great professor, enjoyest the outward privileges of the gospel, aboundest in duties and performances; if God hath given thee gifts and parts; if godly men commend thee, and thou art sometimes confident of thy own good condition; if thou walkest according to thy natural light, and joinest with them that fear the Lord; if some good affections, like a flash of lightning, on a sudden surprise thee; though most of these are good, yet do not hence conclude thy undoubted right to salvation; for all these may consist with unregeneracy, and Christ telleth thee 'that except thou art born again, thou canst not see the kingdom of God.' As the alchymist's gold appeareth as good as the true gold, but it will not endure the seventh fire, nor comfort the heart as a cordial—both which the true gold will; so, if all these should meet in thee, they would make thee look like a saint; but, believe it, they will never endure the fire of Scripture, which must shortly try thee whether thou art true gold or counterfeit, nor comfort thy soul as a cordial when physicians shall give over thy body.

Thirdly, If without regeneration none can attain salvation, it informeth us of the difficulty of salvation, that it is a hard thing to get to heaven. It is no easy matter to be regenerated and made holy; and therefore it is no easy matter to be glorified and made happy. Where the gate is strait it is hard to get in. 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly

appear?' 1 Pet. iv. 18. The apostle there intendeth not the uncertainty, but the difficulty of the salvation of the godly. If it be so hard for them to be saved that have passed the pikes, shot the gulf, gone through the pangs of the new birth, and travelled a considerable part of their way heavenward, how hard will it be for them who are not yet set out, that have not taken one step in the way to life!

The sleepy world, indeed, dream that men may go to heaven without so much ado; they look upon civility to be sanctity, worldly sighs to be godly sorrow, not doubting their estates to be faith in Christ; and if they can but spare a little time, and now and then, from the world and the flesh, to mumble over a few night-petitions, they hope with the help of these bladders to swim through the ocean of divine fury to heaven. Or if they come short of these fig-leaves wherewith many of Adam's children endeavour, though in vain, to cover their nakedness, yet if they have the warning piece of sickness before the murdering piece of death be shot off, that they can but cry, Lord, have mercy upon us, or tell their neighbours that they are sorry for their sins, or get a minister to pray with them, then all must be well, and they must as sure go, when they die, to God and Christ, as they lived to the flesh and the devil. But stay, friends, a little, there are more words than one to this spiritual bargain between God and your souls; there is a work of regeneration to be done, or else ye are undone eternally; ye must be thoroughly and universally new made, or else ye are marred for ever.

Christ would never have commanded men to strive, as to an agony, to enter in at the strait gate, Mat. vii. 13; to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. ii. 12; to labour for the food which endureth to everlasting life, John vi. 27, if it had been such an easy thing to have reached heaven. Things of such excellency are not obtained with such facility; pebbles lie common, but pearls are hardly come by. They must travel far, dig deep, work hard, that will get the golden mines. The way to hell lieth down hill; a weak body may run down hill, but it is hard to go up hill to mount Zion.

Friend, I write not these things to discourage—alas! I need not; there is not a straw in the way to heaven but thou, if unconverted, stumblest at it, when thou canst leap over blocks in the way to hell—but to awaken thee out of thy carnal security, and to quicken thee to seriousness and industry about that which is of such unspeakable concernment to thy soul. Our first births are many times

accompanied with hard labours, ushered in by sharp throes and bitter pangs; our second births are always harder. Oh the terrors and horrors, the convictions and convulsions, the tremblings of soul and lancings of conscience, the thunderings from the law, the lightnings from hell-fire, with which often this new creature is born! It is hard labour, indeed, which bringeth this babe of grace into the world.

I have read of Melanchthon, that when he was first converted he thought it almost impossible for any man to withstand the evidence and authority of the word of God; whereupon he told one of his friends, that when he came to preach he would make work among souls; but, after some years spent in that calling, being demanded what success of his labours, he answered that old Adam was too strong for young Melanchthon. Alas, friend, possibly thou mayest think that thou wilt turn to God hereafter, and thereby prevent thy burning in hell for ever. Believe it, it is not so easy to turn from sin to God as thou imaginest. Conversion is another manner of thing, and more hard than most men think; thou couldst sooner create a world than make thyself a new creature. The resurrection of thy body, if it were dead in the grave, were an easier work than the resurrection of thy soul to newness of life.

As the birth of the natural, so the birth of the spiritual man requireth infinite strength. It is God, not the midwife, that taketh the child out of the mother's womb, Ps. xxii. 9. The hand of God alone can open that door, and let the little infant into the world, Gen. xxix. 31, otherwise the womb would be its tomb. So the birth of the new man is wholly from God; and the power wherewith he effects it is both miraculous and almighty.

Reader, if thou dost take a brief view what things are wrought when any one is new made, and how little he doth contribute to them, nay, how opposite he is against them, thou mayest perceive that neither regeneration nor salvation are easy.

Thy mind must be enlightened to see both sin and the Saviour. Now is it easy to open the eye of the blind? who can do it but he whom Augustine calleth *totus oculus*, all eye? When Jesus gave sight to one that was born blind, the Jews themselves could not but acknowledge him a worker of miracles, John ix. 6, 16. What then will the scattering the mists of ignorance and dispersing the clouds of darkness, which gather and thicken about our understandings by nature, speak the Sun of righteousness to be? Eph. v. 8. Thy heart also must be thoroughly humbled; stone must be turned into flesh. And oh, it is not easy to melt such hard metal, when

thy heart naturally is like clay hardened both by the sunshine of mercies and fire of judgment, that no change of weather can make that stone to weep, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Besides, the strongholds of sin must be cast down; thy old friends must be deserted and prosecuted with implacable hatred as irreconcilable enemies; those beloved lusts, which are at thy right hand, have such a large room in thy heart, must be cut off and parted from thee. Thy *dilectum delictum*, the Isaac of thy corruption, which is the child of thy warmest affection, in which thou hast taken such great delight, and from which thou hast promised thyself such large returns of profit, pleasure, or preferment, must be laid on the altar, and have the sacrificing knife of mortification thrust into the heart of it, and its blood poured out before the Lord. Man, is not this a hard saying! (as they spake in another case,) who can hear it? a hard lesson, who can learn it? Thy lust will not, like a lamb, go silently to the slaughter, but it will roar and rage, fight stoutly for its life with many carnal arguments, and even rend thy heart with its hideous outcries. Who can tell the struggling of this beast before it will be brought to the block? Dives and his dishes, Balaam and his wages, Achan and his wedges, Herod and his Herodias, the young man and his great means, are not easily separated. Oh how difficult is it to wean the child of disobedience from those breasts which he hath sucked so often and with so much complacency, and to divorce them which, like man and wife, have been ravished with each other's love! In works of art it is hard to build, easy to destroy; in works of nature a tree which hath been many years growing may be cut down in an hour: but in works of sin it is otherwise; man's weakness can easily build them up, but God's power can only throw them down.

Pompey, when the Romans said that if Cæsar came to Rome they saw not how they could resist his power, told them, that if he did but stamp with his foot on any ground in Italy, he would bring men enough, both footmen and horsemen, to do it; but when Cæsar was coming with his army, Phaonius bid Pompey stamp with his feet, and fetch the soldiers which he had promised. But all was in vain: Pompey found it more difficult than he thought; for Cæsar made him first flee, and then in a fight totally routed him. The devil persuades men that they may defer their regeneration till their dissolution, and then it will be an easy matter to foil their spiritual foes; but, alas! they find it not so easy to mortify earthly members and destroy the body of death, when their soul's

adversaries with united strength encounter them fiercely and conquer them eternally.

Further, all thy earthly comforts, whether friends, relations, name, estate, limbs, life, must be laid at the feet of Christ, hated for his sake, and parted with at his call and command, and that for the hope of such things as thou never sawest, nor art ever like to see whilst thou livest. Is not this, reader, a hard chapter, to forego an estate in hand for something only in hope, to throw away present possessions, and follow Christ thou knowest not whither; to receive an inheritance thou knowest not when?

And as thy sins and thy soul must be parted asunder, so thy Saviour and thy soul must be joined together; faith must follow repentance; thy own righteousness must be esteemed as dross and dung; the weight of thy soul and the burden of thy sins must be laid on the naked cross of Jesus Christ. Now, for thee who art by nature so extremely in love with thyself, to loathe thyself; and for thee, notwithstanding thy discouragements from the number and nature of thy sins, the threatenings and curses of the law, the wrath and righteousness of God, to cling about, and hang upon the Lord Jesus, and resolve, though he kill thee, yet thou wilt trust in him, surely this is not easy; the work of God in infusing justifying faith is as great as in faith miraculous. 'This is the work of God,' saith Christ, 'that ye believe in the name of him whom he hath sent,' John vi. 29. The work of God, not only in regard of its excellency, because no work in man is more pleasing to God than believing on his Son, but also in regard of its difficulty, because none but a God can enable a man to believe; the bird can as soon fly in the egg as thy soul mount up by faith towards heaven till the almighty God assist thee.

Further, all the commands of God must be heartily embraced, some whereof are as contrary to flesh and blood as fire to water. Self, which is thy great idol, must be denied; the world, with all its pomp and pride, in comparison of Christ, refused; principalities and powers re-encountered and foiled; thine enemies loved (and if killed, it must be with kindness;) godliness owned, though much disgraced by others; truth followed close, though it threaten to dash out thy teeth with its heels; a buffeted Christ with his naked cross preferred before weighty crowns; things which reason cannot comprehend, believed, and which none ever obtained, laboured for. Friend, are these easy things? what thinkest thou? Add to all this the consideration not only of thy weakness and inability to do

these things, but also thy wickedness and contrariety to them; thou art not only deprived of good, but all over depraved with evil: 'The imaginations and thoughts of thy heart are evil, only evil, and that continually,' Gen. vi. 5. 'Thou dost resolvedly and obstinately refuse good and choose evil,' Eccles. viii. 11; Jer. xliv. 16. 'The hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil,' Eccles. viii. 11. Observe how full that text is: man is resolved to have his minion, his lust, though he have wrath, and death, and hell into the bargain. As the mother of Nero, being told that her son would be her death if ever he were emperor, answered, Let him kill me, so he may reign; so they say, let sin reign, though it kill us, though it damn us. 'The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' If thou wert only empty of God and grace, the work were more easy; but thou art an enemy to grace and godliness; thy carnal mind (which is Lady Reason herself, thy highest natural excellency) is—not an enemy, for such a one may be reconciled, but in the abstract—enmity against God. Thou hatest God, Rom. i. 30; his people, 1 John iii. 12; his precepts, Prov. i. 25-29; his Son, John xv. 25, and all for his sake. Thou fightest against him daily, sinnest in defiance of him continually, entailest thy quarrel upon thy posterity, carriest it with thee into the other world, (if thou diest unregenerate,) and there art throwing thine envenomed darts of blasphemy, and spitting thy poison against the Most High to eternity. Now be thy own judge; is it easy to cure that patient who thus desperately hates both physician and physic? John iii. 5.

Water indeed, saith one, may somewhat easily be dammed up, but no art nor labour can make it run back in its own channel. It was by a miracle that the river of Jordan was driven back; and it is no less than a miracle that the tide of sin, which ran so strong, should be turned; that the sinner who before was sailing towards hell, and wanted neither wind nor tide to carry him forward, should now alter his course, and tack about for heaven. This is hard; it is not more strange to see the earth fly upward and fire move downward than to see a sinner walk contrary to his nature in the ways of grace and holiness. Now, reader, is not that man worse than mad that either delayeth or dallieth about his conversion, upon supposition that he can do it easily enough hereafter, when all this which I have written must be wrought in regeneration, and when he is not only empty of, an enemy to, but even enmity against it all?

Though the work of conversion, and therefore the way to salva-

tion, be thus difficult to all, yet to some it is more difficult than to others. In respect of God indeed, *quoad Deum,* one is as easily converted as another, for infinite power and mercy know no difference; but *quoad nos,* in respect of us, it is more hard to bring some towards holiness and heaven than others: where the matter is most rugged and untoward, it is harder to bring it to a good and comely form. Some pieces of timber are more knotty than others, and therefore not so easily squared and fitted for the spiritual temple and heavenly Jerusalem as others; all spiritual children are not brought forth with the same strength and labour.

I shall mention three or four sorts of persons who are not so soon as others persuaded to real and unfeigned piety; and truly my end is, that they may be powerfully roused, and effectually renewed before they be eternally ruined.

First, The mere civil moral man. This man, Narcissus-like, doats on himself, and thereby is hardly brought to deny himself. The more the tooth is fastened to the gum, the harder it is to part them; the more the man, like a tree, is rooted in the earth of self, the more difficult to stock him up. The civil man looks on himself in the glass of scandalous sinners' lives, and finding his face so clean and fair in comparison of theirs, he falls extraordinarily in love with himself, which many times proves his destruction: he takes his civility for sanctity, that which is less than the shadow for the substance; and without question, it is not easy to make him eager after godliness, when he is confident he hath it already. A profane person is (not seldom) sooner convinced and converted than this conceited civilian; for that man will sooner acknowledge himself sick, but this patient, though sick unto death, looks on himself as whole, and so to have no need of a physician. In this sense, I suppose, the words of our Lord are spoken, that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before scribes and pharisees, Mat. xxi. 31.

As a ship that is under sail, though in a contrary course, is sooner brought about, than one that lieth aground in the harbour can be launched forth; so he that is in motion, though in a sinful conversation, is often sooner reduced than he that lieth still in the thoughts of his own condition. As I can sooner overtake a child that runneth from me, than my shadow, which tarrieth nigh me; so it is easier to recover a gross offender, than this shadow of the civilian; for though he run not so far from grace as the other, yet he will be sure to keep his distance. He useth his outward unblameableness as a shield to fence off the power of godliness; he

usually compareth himself with them that are very evil, as a coward choosing a weak adversary, and because he much excelleth them, therefore concludeth that he is very good. Reader, it is far from my thoughts to discourage civility, much less to encourage open impiety, though the whole will of God must be taught, what use soever corrupt hearts will make of it; but to make thee watchful, that thy outward harmlessness prove not a hindrance to inward holiness.

Secondly, The hypocrite is one who is with more difficulty than ordinary converted. Hypocrisy is like a fistula, which hath a very small orifice, but many turnings and windings in the body, like coney burrows, so that it is very hardly discerned and cured; this man seems to be what a saint is indeed; and because he is like a godly man, performing the same duties, and forbearing the same iniquities, as to the external part, therefore he gathers that he is one indeed; but he embraceth a cloud instead of Juno; he appeareth to be near the kingdom of God, but never careth to come at it; as a parallel line, he keeps a scantling with the way of godliness, but never meeteth with it. There is some particular exception which this man hath taken against Christ and his ways, that though he may often cheapen, yet he seldom buyeth the pearl of price; he escapes storms and pirates at sea, and makes shipwreck in the haven, where destruction is no less sure, but much more miserable; he escapes the gross lusts of publicans and harlots, and yet is further than both from eternal life.

It is harder to convince this man of his sins than others. If I tell a drunkard, a swearer, or an adulterer of his transgressions, and the necessity of conversion, this man's foul conversation is a forcible conviction to him; yea, and his own conscience will possibly fly in his face, take part with me, and give evidence against him; but if I tell a hypocrite of the necessity of sanctification, and pursue him with the pieces of the law, he presently betakes himself, like the beasts, to his den of duties, and therein shelters himself; nay, his natural conscience being fed and bribed with a few performances, may plead for him, at least not say a word against him.

Besides, when this man is convinced of his lost estate, it is harder to break this man's heart than another's; for his heart hath not only a natural hardness, but an extraordinary acquired hardness, such a hardness as is acquired by duties and ordinances. Now, as where the sun is most powerful, there are the hardest metals; so where the sunshine of spiritual blessings is most plenti-

fully enjoyed, and thus wretchedly abused, there are the hardest hearts. No softening like gospel softening, no hardening like gospel hardening.

Tell a man that never heard of the gospel, or very seldom, when he is convinced of his sins and misery, of the love of God in sending his only Son into the world to die, that poor sinners might not perish; tell him of the infinite love of Christ, in giving himself a sacrifice for his soul; how freely Christ invites him, how fully he provides for him, how willing he is to accept him, how welcome he will make him: oh how this man sometimes falls a-weeping, wringing his hands, and renting his heart, that ever he should abuse such love and mercy, refuse such incomparable merits, walk in the whole course of his heart and life unworthy of such a blessed, glorious, holy, and gracious God! the word of God doth wound this man to the soul; but say all this and much more to a hypocrite, his heart is like the rock, not at all moved. The promises of God do not cleanse him from pollutions; but they are as physic to which his body hath been much used, which stirs him not at all, nor purgeth away any ill humours. Threatenings do not work with him, be they never so dreadful and terrible; as a smith's dog, being accustomed to it, he can sleep securely, though the sparks of the forge fly about him, nay, though the flames of hell flash in his face.

Reader, if thou shouldst be one of this sort, for the Lord's sake mind soundness with speed; for hypocrisy will harden thine heart insensibly, and every day widen the breach betwixt God and thy soul.

Thirdly, The rich man. The man that is rich in this world, is hardly brought to mind the riches of the other world; his heavy load of earth doth much hinder him in his journey to heaven; his riches clasp about his affections, as the ivy about the oak, sucking out the heart of it, for its own leaves and berries. This man taketh up with his present possessions, in comparison whereof he disesteemeth the saints' reversions. As a vessel that is exceedingly laden, when it meets with storms and tempests, is with more difficulty kept from sinking than one which hath but just enough to ballast it; so it is more hard to keep him from sinking into hell that hath a great estate, than him that hath, according to Agur's wish, neither poverty nor riches. And the reason is, because, though spiritual comforts run low, this rich man is contented, in regard that his temporal comforts run full-top. He makes up the absence of Christ with the presence of creatures, when, it may

be, poverty might cause him, as the prodigal, to think of returning to his Father's house, where is spiritual plenty.

Quintus Aurelius, in the days of Sylla, had a fair grange, which lay convenient for some great person, which caused him to be put in among them that were to be put to death; but as soon as he saw his name among those that were in the list, he cried out, My land at Alba hath killed me.

Some men's lands have cost them their lives, and been the knife to cut the throat of their bodies; but many a man's gold hath lost him his God, and been the knife to cut the throat of his soul. Rich men, like pampered horses, are the most unruly, leaping over the hedges of divine precepts, the hardlier kept within their bounds because full fed; the young man's silver lost him his precious soul; he went away from Christ sorrowful, because he had great possessions; had the man been poor for a few days, he might have been rich for ever; but alas, his wealth here, through the wickedness of his heart, caused his everlasting want; whereupon Christ tells us, 'How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven! I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. xix. 23, 24. Heaven is a stately palace with a narrow portal, through which this camel with his thick bunch of clay can hardly get. It is observed amongst anglers, that pickerels are not easily, nor often caught. A man may catch a hundred minums before he takes one pickerel; and the reason is, he preyeth at pleasure on the lesser fish, and therefore seldom hath any stomach to bite at the bait; so it fareth with rich men, their stomachs are so cloyed with the things of this world, that they have no appetite to the dainties of the word, when the poor are gospelized. They contentedly take that for their portion which God intended only for their pension, and make their wealth their throne to sit down upon with delight, which God designed for their footstool, and the faithful laid at the apostles' feet.

In some fenny places in England, it is storied, where they are much troubled with gnats, the people hang up dung, to which when they fly they are caught with a net provided there for that purpose; the dung of profit is the devil's bait, with which he catcheth many persons. Well may it be called the 'mammon of unrighteousness,' for it both prompteth them to many sins, as well as pierceth them through with many sorrows. Gregory saith, that sitting in the see of Rome when it flourished, he trembled every time he thought on that text, 'Son, remember that thou hadst thy

good things in thy lifetime,' lest his outward plenty should be all his portion.

If, reader, thou art wealthy, be watchful over thy heart, lest, like birdlime, it hinder the wings of thy soul from mounting up to heaven. What the Egyptians said of the Israelites, 'They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in,' Exod. xiv. 3, may fitly be applied to many men that are wealthy. They are entangled in the world, this wilderness hath shut them in. Like Lot's wife, they set out for the Zoar of heaven, but their hearts hanker after the Sodom of earth, and so they look back and perish in the way. Ah, it is rare indeed to be very rich and truly religious. Such men are often taken out of the world before the world be taken out of them.

Be careful, O friend, if the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee in earthly enjoyments, that they prove not heavenly impediments; that his mindfulness of thy body do not make thee forgetful of thy soul; lest thy wealth, like Achan's wedge of gold, cleave thy soul in sunder.

Fourthly, The old sinner is not easily converted, but, like an old maid when married, hath harder labour than ordinary. The longer the ground of man's heart lieth fallow, bringing forth nothing but weeds, unploughed up by repentance, the harder it groweth, and with the more difficulty is broken up. It was hard to cast out the devil who had for a long time possessed the man; the apostles could not do it, and when Christ himself did it, it was not without much renting and raging, Mark ix. 21, 26.

Common experience telleth us that a ship, the longer it leaketh, the harder it is to be emptied; a house, the longer it goeth to ruin, the worse to repair; a nail, the farther it is driven in, the harder to get out. Christ raised two to life in the Gospel (besides others.) One was a maid newly dead, Luke viii. 54, to whom Christ spake but little: 'Maid, I say unto thee, arise;' and the work was quickly done. The other was one who had been dead so long till he stank. Now mark what work there was to enliven him, John xi. 41: Christ weepeth, groaneth in spirit, prayeth to his Father, then turneth to Lazarus, and crieth with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.' I only allude to it. When the sinner hath been but few years dead in sin, a low voice of Christ can raise him up, but when a man hath been not four days, but forty or fifty years rotting in the grave of corruption, that he stinks in the nostrils of others, it must be a loud voice indeed which must quicken him. How hard is it to turn the old swine, the old drunkard to temperance, and the old goat, the old adulterer, to chastity!

Though they be so old that their bodies cannot act them, yet their hellish hearts affect them. When they have nothing left but the dog-days of their age, their bodies full of sores, yet their souls are fuller of sins.

The longer the tree standeth in the ground, the more it roots, and the faster it settleth itself; so that, though a child might some time have removed it, yet now all the men in the parish cannot pluck it up: Jer. xiii. 23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.'

Custom in sin takes away all conscience of sin, and hardeneth the heart more against God and godliness. As a youth, when he first cometh to be apprentice to some handicraft trade, his hand is very tender, and no sooner is it set to work but it blisters and puts him to pain; but he continuing long at the trade, his hand hardens, and he can follow his work, not only without pain, but with much pleasure: so when a man is a young sinner, conscience is tender, like a queasy stomach, troubled much with the least thing that offends it; but continuance in sin makes conscience seared and brawny, that afterwards the sinner, like the ostrich, can digest iron, and like the Turkish slaves, feed on opium, and his stomach not at all recoil or complain. It is reported of the Cretans, that when they cursed their enemies, they did not wish fire in their houses, nor a dagger at their hearts, but that which would bring greater woe, *ut mala consuetudine delectentur*, that they might delight in an evil custom; for custom is not another nurture, but another nature, and that which is natural is not easily reduced.

Some say there is no transplanting trees after seven years' rooting. I am sure it is hard to transplant them out of a state of nature into a state of grace who have been seventy years rooting in the earth. Old servants will not easily leave their masters; they will many times have their ears bored and be everlasting slaves, rather than be made free.

It is with old sinners, saith one,[1] as with them who have lived long under a government, they like to be as they are, though but ill, rather than to think of a change; or like those who in a journey have gone out of their way all day; such will rather take a new path over hedge and ditch, than think of going so far back to be set right.

Old sinner, for the sake of thy soul proceed no farther. Knowest thou not that every step thou takest in thine unconverted state maketh thy condemnation more deep, thy condition more danger-

[1] Gurnal's Armour.

ous, and thy conversion more difficult? Is it not high time for thee to begin to work out thy salvation, when the sun of thy life is setting? Ah, it is one of the saddest spectacles in the world, to behold a man full of silver hoary hairs, that is void of a golden sanctified heart. Surely of all men alive, thou hast cause to abound in sorrow, who dost to this day abide in thy sins.

CHAPTER VI.

A use by way of trial, wherein the character of regenerate persons is set down, with some quickening motives to examination.

The second use which I shall make of this doctrine shall be by way of examination. If without the second birth thou canst not escape the second death, nor obtain eternal life, then, reader, try whether thou art new born or no; commune with thy heart, and see whether this work be done, that thou mayest know how thou shalt fare in the other world: 'Wherefore, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure,' 2 Pet. i. 10. The first fountain of our felicity is election; and the manifestation of this is our calling. By vocation God bringeth to pass in time what he appointed from eternity. As a word is an outward thought, and a thought an inward word, so vocation is outward election, or election put into act and made visible; and election is inward vocation, or God's intention to convert and save. Election is eternal calling; calling is a temporal election; so that by ensuring thy calling, thou ensurest thy election. Make thy calling sure; be not satisfied to let thy salvation hang in suspense, to follow Christ as the people followed Saul, trembling, not knowing how it shall fare with thee; but strive for full assurance, 'that an abundant entrance may be ministered unto you into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2 Peter i. 11.

I have read of an old wicked usurer, who had nothing in his mouth but, It is good to be sure. If his servant went to receive money, he would follow after him, and being asked the reason, would answer, It is good to be sure. If he had told his money once, he would do it a second, yea, a third time, saying, It is good to be sure. If he locked his door himself, he would arise out of his bed to feel it locked, still pleading for his reason, It is good to be sure. It came to pass that this man fell desperately sick. His servant calleth to him—desirous to make him sensible of his sins—

Master, have you been at prayers? Yea, John, saith he. Sir, said the servant, go to prayers again; you know it is good to be sure. That is more than needs, saith the usurer; I am sure enough of that. Truly this man's heart is the resemblance of most men. They are all for security in bargains, sales, and purchases. If they buy an inheritance on earth, how sure will they make it! The tenure shall be as strong as the brawn of the law, or the brains of lawyers, can devise. What bonds, deeds, fines, recoveries, leases, evidences, and, if any scruple, collateral security, are there to ensure it! But, alas! who ensures the inheritance above? How few are there that take any pains to secure their right to those ever-living pleasures! Like Jacob, though in another sense, men put their right hand of care, caution, and diligence upon the younger son, the body, and their left hand on the elder, the soul. How few make their calling and election sure!

But, reader, if thou would make sure thy predestination and fore-appointment to glory, it must be done by making sure thy regeneration and translation into a state of grace. Thou canst not ascend into heaven, and see thy name written in the Lamb's book of life, but thou mayest descend into thine own heart, and see it by the seeds and principles of a spiritual life; as if any man would know whether the sun shineth or no, he need but look on the ground and see the reflection of its beams, and not on the body of the sun, which will but the more dazzle his eyes. The pattern is known by the picture, the cause by the effect, the original by the copy, election by regeneration. The soul that is conformed to God's law may know that he is enrolled in God's list. If I have chosen God, I may safely conclude that God hath chosen me.

The historian[1] reporteth how a senator, relating to his son the great honours decreed to a number of soldiers whose names were written in a book, the son was importunate to see the book. The father shewed him the outside. It seemed so glorious that the son desired him to open it. By no means, saith the father; it is sealed by the council. Then saith the son, Tell me if my name be there. The father saith, The names are secret to the senate. The son, studying how he might get some satisfaction, desired his father to declare the merits of those inscribed soldiers, which the father doing, and the son consulting with his own heart, found himself to be none of them. Reader, though the book of life, which includeth the names of those whose heads are destined to glorious diadems be secret, yet the deserts of those inscribed there

[1] Tacitus.

are open; they are as a chosen generation, a peculiar people, so also a holy nation, a royal priesthood, a called company, a sanctified society, a regenerated remnant; they are culled out of the world, called by the word, separated for the service of the Lord; they are born of the Spirit, brought up in the Spirit, and they walk after the Spirit. The task therefore which I now set thee, is to try whether thou art one of these—whether thou art born again, without which thou canst not see the kingdom of God.

Now, though the commandment of God be argument and reason enough to a Christian why he should examine himself whether he be in the faith or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5—for a true subject dares not deny any coin which hath the image and stamp of his sovereign upon it—yet I shall give thee two or three thoughts to stir thee up to the trial of thyself.

First, Consider that thy all hangs on this hinge of regeneration. All that thou art worth for thine unchangeable estate in the other world dependeth on this; this is the foundation of that hope, that building which reacheth to heaven. Now it is dangerous to err in fundamentals; the stability of the building depends on the strength of the foundation. For a man to go out of his way at the first setting out is saddest of all. Regeneration is the beginning of Christianity in thee; nay, thy interest in all the unsearchable riches in Christ standeth on this: if regenerated, then thy sins are pardoned, thy person accepted, God is thy Father, Jesus Christ thy husband and Saviour, the Spirit thy comforter, the promises are thy portion, heaven thy home; but if thou art not adorned with the pious fruits of Christ's Spirit, thou art not interested in the precious fruits of his merits; therefore make sure here. God will deal with thee to eternity according to thy having or wanting this. Now doth it not concern thee to beware of cozening thyself here, when a mistake in this will make thee miserable for ever? If ever any tresses had need be strong, then surely they which draw such a weight as thine endless welfare. Where men intend to dwell long, they build strong. Soldiers use tents which have no foundation, because they intend but a short stay in them. Thou lookest for a city which hath a foundation. Friend, hath thy expectation of it any foundation? Wouldst thou build slightly for a dwelling of eternity? Zeuxis being asked why he was so exact in painting, answered, because he painted for eternity. Lines which concern eternity had need be exactly drawn; and deeds and marks, and all things indeed which concern eternity, had need to be exquisitely done. If a merchant venture all his estate in one

vessel, and where there is much hazard in the voyage, how full of fear and care will he be lest the ship should miscarry, himself and his family be ruined! Many a sad thought will he have in the day as sour sauce to his food, and possibly many an aching heart in the night to keep him waking. He is even like to be beside himself, so much is he perplexed; and ask him the reason, he will tell you, I think I have cause. All that I am worth is ventured in that bottom: should it be lost and perish, we are all lost; my wife, self, and children must all perish. Thus the man lives in little ease both day and night, till at last he considereth with himself of what concernment the safety of that vessel is to him; he resolveth, and accordingly goeth to the insurer's office and insureth his whole estate, and then he is satisfied; those fears which, like weights, hung on the clock of his heart, and would not suffer it to rest, are now taken off, and he eats his bread with cheerfulness, and drinks his wine with a merry heart; he can in all conditions be contented, because his all is insured.

Thus, reader, regeneration is the vessel in which all that thou art worth, not for this present perishing, but for the other everlasting world, is ventured; if that be sound, thine endless welfare is safe; if that be feigned and lame, thou art lost for ever. How canst thou take any comfort in the abundance of fading creatures whilst thy all, thine eternity, is in danger? Oh go to the insuring office, bring thy riches, thy silver, to the balance of the sanctuary, and thereby try whether it hath its full weight!

Man, what sayest thou to this reason for self-examination? Is it not of unspeakable weight? and I shall shew thee that it is of unquestionable truth. Doth not the living God tell thee, that except thou art born again, thou shalt not see his kingdom? Doth he not say expressly that without are dogs? Rev. xxii. 15. The Father's house is only for children; dogs must be without doors. Pharaoh's court admitted of vermin, but I can assure you that God's will not: 'Into it can in no wise enter anything that is defiled or unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27. Impure persons can never get into the most holy place. Heaven must be in thee before thou canst be in heaven. It was a good inscription which a bad man wrote on the door of his house, *Per me nihil intret mali:* Let no evil pass through me. Whereupon said Diogenes, *Quomodo ingredietur dominus?* How then shall the master get into his own house? That inscription without question agreeth with the celestial habitation. There is nothing there but what is holy: the Father is holy, John xvii. 11; the holy child Jesus, Acts xiv. 27; the Holy

Ghost, Acts xxi. 11; the creatures there are holy, the holy angels, Mark viii. 38; the saints, or holy men and women, Heb. xii. 23; the work and eternal employment there is holiness; the servants wait on their master without sinning, as well as without ceasing; the song there is 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,' Rev. iv. 8; canst thou therefore think without holiness to get thither?

Secondly, Consider that God will try thee. He knoweth now what thou art, whether dross or gold, and he will shortly bring thee to the fire, and make thee known both to thyself and others. Though the waters of thy corruptions may run for a time under ground, and be hidden from the eyes of men, yet they will at length appear. Thou art at present all crystal to God; he needeth not, as Momus would have, a window into thy breast, for he seeth thee thoroughly; he seeth thy inwards more perfectly than thou and others can see thy outward parts. 'The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the Lord trieth the heart,' Prov. xvii. 3. He hath a thread which leadeth him unerringly through the labyrinth of thy heart. He needeth no serious inquisition about thee, for he knoweth thee by immediate intuition. He walks through the road of thy heart every hour; therefore it concerneth thee not to balk it.

He will try thee probably in life, but certainly at death and judgment; and shouldst not thou then try thyself? God may try thee in thy life by prosperity; he may give thee strong meat, and thereby examine thy stomach whether it be good or bad; he may let the world flow in upon thee to try how thy affections will flow out upon it; believe it, rich wines will try thy brains. It is said of Pius Quintus (so called, because) that when he was a mean man he was looked upon as a good man, and had great hopes of his own salvation; but when he came to be a cardinal he doubted much about it, and when he was a pope he altogether despaired of it; thus the place doth often discover the person.[1] Hot waters will manifest whether there be life in a man or no; and a full great wind will try whether the vessel of thy soul be ballasted with grace or no. It is said of Caius Caligula there was never better servant nor worse master. Poisonous and profitable roots are both discovered in summer, though they were hid all the winter. That corruption which lay in the body undiscerned, when the season was cold, breaks out either in the face by pimples, or in the other parts by some disease, when the weather is warm. But it is more likely that God will try thee by adversity. God telleth Jerusalem that

[1] Magistratus indicat virum.

he would search her with candles, Zeph. i. 12; that is, as exactly as men search with candles, prying into every corner of the house: so God of the heart, bringing forth their secret ways, revealing their hidden wickedness. The words imply both the manner, how exactly God would do it, and the means, how terribly he would do it by some dreadful judgment; he would kindle a fire, and search them by the light of that fire. Reader, if thou wilt not search thy soul by the sunlight of his word, expect that he should search thee by the candlelight, the firelight, of his dreadful works. The flail of tribulation will discover the chaff from the wheat; and the fire of affliction, the dross from the gold. Sharp weather will try whether thy body be sound or sickly. A storm will discover the mariner, and a battle the soldier. God led Israel about in the wilderness to try and to prove them, Deut. viii. 16. Affliction is like Solomon's sword, that discovereth which is the true, which the false mother; or like Simeon's sword, which pierceth through men's souls, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Now, friend, if God will try thee by some sharp affliction, is it not better to prevent this by self-examination? It may be, God may try thee by disgrace, or loss of thy whole estate, or by loss of liberty, limbs, or life; now how wilt thou do to bid adieu to all earthly comforts for Jesus Christ? to welcome a prison, kiss a stake, smile at torments, look a violent death in the face with colour in thy cheeks and courage in thy heart, to endure this fiery trial by God, that didst never try thyself beforehand? 'If thou hast run with footmen, and they wearied thee, how wilt thou do to run with horsemen?' Jer. xii. 5. If self-trial in thy chamber or closet (where are none but God and thy conscience to be witnesses, and Scripture to be judge of the controversy) be so irksome and grievous to thee, how tedious will thy trial be by flames and torments! Believe it, when thou comest to the fire it will be known whether thou art a full or an empty pitcher. Blessed Bilney tried his finger by himself in the candle, before his whole body in the flames at the stake. 'O gather yourselves together,' saith the prophet, Zeph. ii. 1—'Gather yourselves together, before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you.' Tremellius reads it, *Excutite vos, verumque excutite.* Examine, unskin yourselves, rip yourselves up, dissect, anatomise your entrails; it is doubled, to shew the fervency and earnestness of God for it, the necessity and weight of it, and man's antipathy and averseness to it: before the decree bring forth, &c., before the judgment which is now in the womb of the threatening come to the

birth of execution. O friend, search thyself faithfully, or be confident that God will search thee dreadfully. Now, as Job told his friends, 'Is it good that God should search thee out?' Job xiii. 9. Is it good that he should, as a surgeon, eat out thy dead senseless flesh by some stinging corrosive, and cure thee of thy lethargy by putting thee into a violent fever? The scholar that will not scan his own verses, and try them by the rule, finds that his master can make him do it under the rod. If God have thoughts of everlasting favour towards thee, he will force thee to know and try thyself by some seasonable fire; he will so shake the tree that it shall be known whether the fruit be rotten or sound.

If God should not try and discover thee to thyself in this world, yet he will certainly in the other world, at the night of death, and in the day of judgment: death will try thee, that will be strong physic, which will fully discover thy constitution. Two or more children play together all day; but when night comes, one child goeth to his father, the other to his father, every one to his own father; it may be they were like one another, that strangers knew not, yea, nor neighbours, to whom they belonged, whose child was this, or whose child is that; but when night comes, one father owns his child, takes him home; the other father calls his child to him, takes him into his house. Thus while men live they are not so well discovered, whether they are of God, or of their father the devil; but when the night of death comes, they are tried to whom they belong: he that is born of God goeth to his Father's house; he that is of his father the devil, goeth, with Judas, to his own place. Rottenest stuffs are oftenest watered, the deformedest faces are usually painted, but the shower of death will wipe and wash all off.

Now if thou wouldst be gathered to thy Father in peace, examine and prove thyself; make sure that there be some good thing in thee towards the Lord thy God. Oh how sad will it be for thee, who art now asleep, to awake, like the jailer, at the midnight of death, and to find thy evidences for the new birth, as he his prisoners in his own apprehension, missing! what an earthquake and heartquake will then possess thee! how pale and trembling wilt thou spring into the presence of God, in the other world, for thy particular judgment! Ah, how sad will it be to err, to mistake then, when an error can never, never be mended! when a mistake will prove soul-murder, an everlasting miscarriage! Oh, it is bad for the vessel of thy soul to leak, to mistake, in the shallow waters of life and time; but oh how sad will it be to be mistaken at an hour of death, and thereby to leak in the ocean of eternity! Speed,

in his Chronicles, observeth, that in the days of Henry VIII., Campius, the pope's legate, came through the streets of London with twenty mules laden, to shew his pomp; but as the triumph passed through Cheapside, the beasts stumbled, brake their collars, cast their coffers, and then the lids flying open, discovered his riches to be nothing but old shoes and boots, torn stockings, old iron, and tattered rags. I tell thee, reader, though now thou mayest be wondered at for thy spiritual wealth, yet as soon as thou stumblest into the other world, it will be tried, it will be known, whether they be real or imaginary riches.

Paul told his Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 19, 'I will come to you shortly, and will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power: for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod, or in love?' O friend, not Paul, but Jesus Christ himself will come to thee by death shortly, and will know, not thy speech, in being puffed up with a shadow of profession, but the power, and try whether thou hast the substance of religion. Now man, what wilt thou? shall he come to thee with a rod, or in love? shall he send good angels to guard thee to heaven, or evil angels to drag thee to hell?

When David was going to encounter with Goliath, he told Saul that he could not go with the armour which Saul had put on him, because he had not proved it, 1 Sam. xvii. 39; and darest thou enter the list against a far greater enemy, even death, with that armour which was never proved? Be confident, if thou fightest without armour of proof, death will foil thee.

The day of judgment will try thee; then naked breasts will be in fashion, and God will rip thee open before the world; nay, if thou wilt not now examine thyself to thy conversion, he will examine thee then to thy confusion, when the judge shall be a consuming fire, and the whole world be in a flame, and thou be tried by a fiery law, Heb. xii. 28; 1 Pet. iii. 10; Deut. xxxiii. 2. It was a sharp kind of examination by which Paul was examined, Acts xxii. 14. The chief captain commanded that he should be examined by scourging. It is a sad kind of examination by which many countries examine malefactors, upon the rack, putting them to exquisite pains.

Reader, remember that if thou dost not examine thyself at this day, God will examine thee at the last day, and it will be an examination upon the rack, an examination with scourging; it will be a word and a wound; every blow will fetch blood; every interrogation will be a stabbing, stinging, killing question. When Christ

shall say to thee, Sinner, how didst thou dare thus to cozen and undo thy soul? what madness possessed thee thus to dally about matters of infinite and endless moment? Hadst thou examined thyself according to my word, and found thyself lost, there had then been some hopes of life; but I tell thee now it is too late. Well, I will rip thee open before angels and men, and cause thy conscience, with its gnawing worm and stinging gripes, to examine thee eternally. The fire of hell shall try what metal thou art, that will prove thee to purpose. O friend, think of this seriously and speedily, for that day of Christ will declare thee; and alas, alas, who shall abide the day of his trial, or who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap. All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom thou shalt then have to do. If thou art afraid to venture a trial in the low court of conscience, where his word shall be thy judge, with what fear and trembling wilt thou appear at his bar, when he that searcheth thine heart, trieth thy reins, and will reward thee according to thy works, shall sit upon the bench? Therefore cast up thy accounts before God and thy soul, whilst there is hope of making all even, lest thou do as some tradesmen, who neglect so long to cast up their books, till at last their books cast them up.

Thirdly, Consider it is possible to know whether thou art new born or no. I do not set thee to beat the air, or to work at the labour-in-vain. A Christian may be assured of his regeneration, and thereby of his salvation. They which have the law of God written in their hearts, may be able to read it. David, when his deeds and evidences were not blotted with his foul offences, could discern them clearly: 'Thy law is within my heart,' Ps. xl. 8. When the sun ariseth he bringeth his natural light with him, whereby he is discovered to the world. A diamond set in a gold ring bringeth such orient sparkling with it, that it causeth men to discern it; truly, so the Sun of righteousness, when he ariseth in the soul, bringeth a spiritual light along with him, which helpeth the new creature to behold him, and the diamond of grace casteth such a sparkling lustre in the heart of a Christian, that it thereby becomes visible.

Regeneration makes a wonderful change and alteration; now great alterations of state are not without observation. Doth a kingdom change its governor, a cruel arbitrary tyrant, that fleeced them, and slew them at pleasure, for a mild, merciful, peaceable prince, that ruleth them with a righteous sceptre, and not take notice of it? Can a creature change his master, sin and flesh, for Christ

and his Spirit; his work of serving divers lusts and pleasure, Tit. iii. 3, for serving the Lord with singleness of heart, and not observe it? When the man is new made, Christ cometh into his heart with his Spirit, graces, gospel. Great guests, when they come into a house, have many eyes upon them; the King of glory doth not come with such a train and retinue in secret; the gradual change from grace to grace is not so visible; but a specifical change from nature to grace is undoubtedly sensible. When the ground, that before brought forth nothing but weeds and thistles, comes to bring forth wheat, an ordinary person may perceive the difference, though how this wheat groweth is not so perceptible. Every new creature doth not know the time, nor manner, nor means of his conversion, but every one may know that he is converted; the mother doth not know how she comes to be quick, but she knoweth that she is quick, for she feeleth the child to stir in her womb; how the shadow moveth on the dial we cannot see, but that it moveth we see plainly, in that it is opposite at night to the place where it was at noon. Though conversion be not ever sensible in the act, yet it is sensible enough by its effects; and the reason why it is not in all alike visible, is because it is not in all alike violent. God converteth some by Boanerges, sons of thunder; others by a Barnabas, a son of consolation. To some he comes, as on mount Sinai, Exod. xix., with thunderings, lightnings, and a great noise; to others, as to Elijah, with a still small voice, 1 Kings xix. 12. The Spirit falls down on some, as on the apostles, like a mighty rushing wind, or like fire shaking and scorching them, Acts ii. 2, 3; on others, as on Jesus Christ, in the shape of a dove, dealing mildly and meekly with them. The jailer is brought home by an earthquake, and an heartquake, Acts xvi. 29, when the door of Lydia's heart is opened softly, and Jesus Christ entereth in without any noise, Acts xvi. 14. Some in a swoon are revived only by pouring a little hot water down their throats, whereas others must be rubbed hard, and beaten sore before they will come to themselves again: Cant. vi. 12, 'Ere I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.'

Some have been infamous for pleasure in sin, and such are usually made more apprehensive of the pain due to sinners; God bringeth all home by weeping-cross, but them especially that have been most wicked. The physician is forced to give strong physic to such sturdy, strong patients, otherwise it will not work. A man that is an old sinner is like one that hath had a bone long out of joint, and is festered; this man must feel much pain before it be brought into its right place.

Sometimes God intendeth to lift a soul high with spiritual consolations; and, to prepare it for them, he layeth it low with legal humiliation. We throw the ball hard against the ground, when we intend that it shall bound high. Paul was forcibly cast to the earth, before he was favourably caught up to the third heaven.

Some are designed to be high in holiness—eminent patterns of piety to others; and such are often filled with sorrow, and do, more than others, feel the smart of sin. When the workman will make his building high and exact, he layeth the foundation deep and low.

God is not limited: he dealeth with men as he seeth good. It is his will, and that is reason enough, that all his children should not be brought forth with the same pain. He hath several medicines, whereof some are more sweet, others more sour, for the cure of their spiritual maladies, and he applieth them as it pleaseth him.

Now, when the Spirit of God worketh most forcibly, then the man perceiveth it most sensibly. Besides, some men and women have had inclinations towards God and godliness ever since they came to any knowledge; they sucked the milk of grace betimes from the breast of their parents, I mean their religious education. Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth, 1 Kings xviii. 12; Timothy from a child knew the holy Scriptures; the dews of grace were dropt from heaven upon their souls early, in the morning of their age. And in such cases conversion, as to the time and manner of it, is under a cloud; for, as he that is locked up in some dark dungeon may easily discover the moment of time when either the least beam of the sun, or glimmering of daylight did break in upon him; whereas he that is always in the open air is sensible that the daylight is broke, that the sun is risen, but cannot tell you precisely when the day sprang, or the sun rose; so some that have been betimes put out apprentices to the devil by their parents, been taught that hellish trade of sin, and nurtured in obstinacy and ignorance, being locked up and fettered in the dungeon of darkness, as Peter in prison; these men may easily remember the time when the day-star from on high did visit them; when the Angel of the Covenant came upon them and caused a light to shine about them, and raised them up, and caused their fetters to fall off, the prison door to fly open, and commanded them to arise and follow him. But those that were ever in the open air—brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, like vessels when seasoned with holiness—those cannot tell you the day when salvation came to their souls; they can tell you the day is

broke, but when they know not. One thing they know, 'that whereas they were blind, now they see,' but how they came by their sight they cannot certify you; they can tell you that they are sanctified, but the season of it they cannot tell. Reader, though the time and manner of this work makes the knowledge of it more easy and sensible to some than to others, yet to all it is possible.

God's precepts speak it possible: God requireth of his people such things as would be to no purpose if they could not be assured of their grace and purity. He commandeth to examine themselves whether they are in the faith or no, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Now, to what purpose or end should the law of God be produced, the person's heart and life compared with it, witnesses be examined, the man thus arraigned in the court of conscience, if the matter in debate could not be brought to an issue, if it could not be known whether he be sanctified or not? God bids us make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10, therefore they may be ensured. We are enjoined to pray with confidence, and to call God Father, Heb. x. 22; Mat. vi. 9; which certainly none can do, if none can know that they are his children.

The apostle tells us that we must rejoice in the Lord, Phil. iii. 1, and that always, 1 Thes. v. 16, even in tribulation, Mat. v. 10, which who can do if he know not whether God be his friend or enemy?

Besides, the promises of God shew it possible: John xiv. 21, 'I will love him,' that keepeth my commandments, 'and manifest myself unto him,' saith Christ; Isa. lx. 16; Ps. l. 23, and lxxxv. 8, 9. Now, what God's mercy promiseth, his truth performeth.

The helps likewise which God affords us speak this feasible. The Scripture setteth down the signs of the men and women which are sanctified, and which shall be saved: 'And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.' To know that we know him is to be assured that we know him: 1 John v. 13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' Mark, they did believe before, yet St John writes that they might believe; they had before the faith of adherence, John writes to them that they might have the faith of assurance. The sacraments are also given as broad seals, and the Spirit as the privy seal of heaven, to ensure salvation, Rom. iv. 11; Eph. i. 30.

In a word, the pattern and experiences of the saints speak this possible; that which others have acquired is not impossible to us.

The children of God have been assured of their adoption, that God was their Father, Isa. lxiii. 16; 1 John iii. 2: 'Though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: doubtless thou art our Father; thou, O Lord, art our Father, and our Redeemer.' They have been assured of their justification, Job xiii. 18; Ps. xlv. 24; perseverance in grace, 1 Thes. v. 25; Rom. viii. 35, to the end; of their right to glory and salvation: 2 Cor. v. 1, 'We know that when the houses of our earthly tabernacles shall be dissolved, we shall enjoy a building of God, an house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.' So 2 Tim. iv. 7. 8; Job xix. 25; 2 Tim. i. 12. And all this assurance of adoption, justification, perseverance in grace, fruition of glory, which saints have, doth proceed from their assurance of their regeneration: 1 John iii. 14, 'We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' Regeneration or holiness is the first fruits which do ensure the harvest, and the earnest which doth confirm the bargain, and ensure the full sum.

Now, reader, having given thee some motives to quicken thee to try thy soul, I shall lay down the marks, and bring thee to the test; and they shall be taken from the nature and effects of regeneration.

First, Examine thine heart by the nature of this true holiness. Now there are two things in the nature of this new creature. In every birth there is *generatio unius et corruptio alterius*, saith the philosopher, something generated and something destroyed; so in this new birth there is the production of grace, and the destruction of vice; the life of righteousness, and the death of sin; the setting up of the ark, and the throwing down of Dagon. The sinfulness of our souls by our first births consisteth in their aversion from God and good, and in their conversion to the evil one and evil; in having the image of Satan imprinted on them, and the image of God blotted out of them. The sanctity of our souls by their second births consisteth in their conversion to God, and their aversion from sin; in having the image of the devil razed out of them, and the image of the Saviour stamped on them. 'As we have borne the image of the earthly, so we must bear the image of the heavenly.' And these two parts of the good part, are like two buckets in a well, as the one, namely, the interest of God, cometh up, the other, namely, the interest of sin and Satan, goeth down; the higher the sun getteth, the more still it scattereth the darkness.

First, There is in this new nature a dying to sin. The apostle calleth it a putting off the old man, Eph. iv. 22, and a dying

to sin, Rom. vi. 11. Conversion, like the shipman's fatal star, is never seen but before the wreck and death of sin. The spring of grace is a living fountain, and cleanseth itself of mire and dirt. Grace, like Christ, increaseth, and sin, like the Baptist, decreaseth. The expression of the Holy Ghost about this is worthy our serious consideration: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin.' Lo, here sin is served by Christ the same sauce which it formerly served Christ. Sin crucified him when he came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and he slayeth it when he cometh into the soul by his Spirit; but, in the words of the apostle, observe sin's appellation and its execution. For its appellation it is called, first, 'the old man,' partly because it is derived and propagated from Adam, the eldest of men; partly in comparison of renovation, and renewing the whole man. It is called, secondly, 'the body of sin,' partly because man's corrupt nature, like a body or stock, brancheth forth into divers actual sins as members, Col. iii. 5; Gal. v. 19; partly because of the strength of it, as also because men are as much naturally in love with their sins as with themselves. But take notice of the execution of this old man, of this body of sin, in the regenerate. The old man 'is crucified.' Sin, like an old man in them which are new made, doth decay and decline every day; it is every hour growing weaker and weaker, and nearer to its grave and utter abolition. Regeneration giveth sin its death's wound, though, as those that are crucified, it dieth lingeringly, yet it dieth certainly. Sin, like a man in a consumption, in a converted person is always wasting and dying, till at last it is quite dead. One that is mortally wounded sprawleth and moveth for a time, but afterwards giveth up the ghost; so sin, while saints live, though it be mortally wounded, doth rage and stir, but it abateth in strength, and dieth with them.

St Augustine relateth of the serpent, that when she groweth old, she draweth herself through a narrow hole, and by this means, stripping off her old skin, she reneweth her age.[1] Truly thus the Christian is made new, by putting off the old coat of the old man.

The Scripture speaketh expressly: 'He that is born of God sinneth not,' 1 John iii. 9, that is, constantly; sin is not his design or employment;[2] and cheerfully, sin is not his delight or element, for

[1] De Civit. Dei, lib. viii. cap. 6.

[2] Ambulare in peccatis est sic versari in peccatis ut in vocatione sua ordinaria.—*Daven. in Col.* ii.

sin is against his new nature. Now a man can do nothing against his nature cordially or constantly; sin may rebel within him, but it cannot reign over him; he looks on sin as his greatest enemy, and therefore it is impossible that he should converse with it in a way of amity. Nay, as fire and water, heat and cold, never meet but they fight, so this new life is in continual war with every lust: the new creature is like unto God, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Hab. i. 13. The evil of sin cannot ordinarily get a good look from him; he cannot meet this ugly guest in any corner of his house but his heart riseth against him; he considereth what a Lord sin displeaseth, what a law sin transgresseth, what a beautiful image sin defaceth, what a glorious name sin dishonoureth, what a lovely, loving Saviour sin buffeted shamefully and tortured cruelly, what a precious soul and peerless salvation sin was like to have lost him eternally. And oh it is a killing look which this soul giveth his dearest lust! Ah, thinks he, that ever my nature should hatch and harbour such hideous monsters! that ever my heart should be a polluted bed to breed and bring forth such a poisonous brood! It was my iniquity that bade defiance to the highest Majesty; it was my corruption which scourged the back, wounded the head, nailed the feet and hands, yea, pierced the very heart of Jesus Christ; my wickedness was the weight which caused his bloody sweat; my lust was the murderer which put to death the Lord of life; it was my covetousness which betrayed him, my cowardliness which condemned him, and my cruelty which executed him; and shall I be a friend to that traitor which was a foe to my Redeemer! Well, whatever it cost me, through the strength of Christ I will have justice upon these murderers; through the help of heaven, these brats of hell shall have their brains dashed out. His great care is every day to conquer his corruptions. The body of sin and death, to which he is tied, is as noisome to his soul as a dead body to his senses. Lust is as burdensome to him as a withered arm, which hangs on a man like a lump of lead. Never did prisoner more ardently desire to be rid of his fetters, than this saint to be freed from subjection to his sins. The distressed Jews did not groan so much under their Egyptian slavery as this true Israelite for spiritual liberty: 'O wretched man that I am,' saith he, 'who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?' Rom. vii. 24. His great end and endeavour, in every providence and every ordinance, is, not the repression, but the ruin of this evil of sin. If the sun of mercy shine warm upon him, he makes use of it to put out the kitchen-fire of wickedness. When God solaceth his spirit with

extraordinary kindness, the sacrifice of thanksgiving that he offereth up is the beast of some sin which he layeth on the altar, and poureth forth its blood before the Lord. When the storm of affliction ariseth, he inquireth for the Jonah which raised the tempest, and endeavoureth that he may be cast overboard and drowned.

And as he makes use of divine providences, so likewise of divine ordinances, for the weakening his corruptions.

In prayer, like the sick child, he pointeth at the place of his pain; he indicteth, accuseth, and condemneth sin, and entreateth that it may be executed; his prayers and tears are his daily weapons wherewith he fighteth against his most inward and secret wickedness. When he perceiveth lust, like Adonijah, usurping the throne of his heart, he goeth unto God, as Bathsheba to David, sighing and saying, Did not my Lord promise his servant that the true Solomon should reign in my soul? that Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace, should sway the sceptre in my spirit? And now, behold, his foes, which thou hast sworn to make his footstool, have traitorously aspired to the crown, and forcibly made me subject to their commands. As Esther, he is very desirous of these Hamans' destruction, and watcheth continually for a fit opportunity to present his petition to the King of kings for that end; and when in any duty he seeth the God of glory to hold out the golden sceptre of mercy towards him, oh then he beggeth for justice: If I have found favour in thy sight, O King, and if it please the King, let the life of my soul be given me at my petition, and the death of my sins at my request. Did thy dear Son die for sin, and shall thy poor servant live in sin? Shall not these thine enemies, which would not have thee to reign over me, be slain before thy face? 'Order my steps by thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me,' Ps. cxix. 133. Thus by prayer, as by one main piece of his spiritual armour, he becomes prevalent. The Romans overcame their enemies sitting, (that is, the senate by their prudent counsels,) but the Christian kneeling; by his holy valour he wrestleth with God, and through the power of Christ gets the victory, 2 Cor. xii. 6.

And because the devil of some lusts will not be cast out without fasting and prayer, therefore he joineth fasting to supplication, and trieth to starve his corruptions. Beforehand he fitteth himself for that day of purging out his ill-humours, by the preparatory potion of meditation. The consideration of his sins, how bloody and heinous in their nature, how crying and crimson in their circumstances, makes his physic work the better. He thinketh before:

The day of mourning for (offending) my Father is coming, and then I will slay my brother Jacob, my dearest and nearest sin. This man bringeth under his natural body, which he may lawfully cherish, that he may abate the strength of the body of death; as men sometimes in a fever open a vein and let out their blood, though it be not bad, that they may weaken their enemy.

In reading and hearing the law of God, he setting his lusts naked before that sword of the Spirit, that they may be hewn by the prophets, and slain by the words of God's mouth. He desires that it may pierce deep, to the dividing of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and to the discovering of the thoughts and intents of his heart. His voice to the minister is like the prophet's to his neighbour, 'Smite me, I pray thee;' and likes him best that in smiting wounds his sin most. He approves of that chirurgeon that searcheth his wounds thoroughly, though he put him to pain; he rejoiceth that the preacher revealeth to him his errors, that he may follow them with hue and cry till they are taken and punished, and so God's pursuit of him may be prevented. If the minister give him a bitter pill of reproof, he doth not, like a queasy stomach, favour his malady and loathe his medicine, but takes it down willingly, knowing that, though such things be not toothsome, yet they are wholesome, and that they must be bitter things that break the bag of worms in his stomach; sweet things will nourish and cherish them. He is glad that the word is fire, that thereby his dross may be consumed; that it is water, because his heart thereby may be washed and purified. 'He hideth the word in his heart, that he may not sin against God,' Ps. cxix. 11.

He goeth to the Lord's supper, that the blood of his sins may be shed by the blood of the Saviour. The cross of Christ is the soul's armour and sin's terror; there is life in it for the death of sin. Pliny saith that the fasting spittle of a man will kill serpents. Sure I am the blood of Christ, applied by faith, will mortify sin, and therefore the saint frequenteth the sacrament. He goeth to it, as Naaman to Jordan, to be cured of his spiritual leprosy; when he approacheth the table of the Lord, and seeth, in the bread broken, and the wine poured out, by faith, Jesus Christ crucified before his eyes, oh how his heart burneth within him in hatred and indignation against his sin, and in desires after, and delight in, his Redeemer. He beholdeth there the knives of his pride, unbelief, hypocrisy, malice, and the like, all redded in the blood of the Mediator; and now his eyes sparkle with fire and fury, and his soul

swelleth with wrath and revenge against them; were but his hand answerable to his heart, I mean his power to his will, he would put sin to as much pain, make it suffer as much shame, cause it to undergo as cursed a death, as ever Jesus Christ did. Now this frame of spirit is exceedingly pleasing to the King of saints; he bespeaks the soul at the sacrament, as Herod did the damsel, 'Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee, to the half, nay, to the whole of my kingdom.' The soul having before consulted with his regenerate part, (for this was a pious plot laid before, only put off till a convenient day,) asketh the head of some lust in a charger. The King sendeth presently, commandeth execution to be done accordingly. The new creature doth now with a joyful heart look up to heaven, and saith, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath this day avenged me of mine enemy; would to God that all the enemies of my Lord the King, and all that rise up within me against thy laws, were as that one lust!

He also withdraweth those things which have fed his spiritual diseases; he takes away the fuel, that he may put out the fire; he hates the very cup out of which he formerly drank his loathsome physic; he cuts off those pipes which have supplied his adversaries; he avoideth the occasions of evil; he knoweth that his corrupt heart is gunpowder; and therefore, wheresoever he goeth, he is fearful of the least spark. 'He hateth the garments spotted with the flesh,' Jude 23. He endeavoureth that his raiment may not only be preserved from burning, but, as the three children's, from singeing. He is a true dove, that doth not only fly from the hawk, from sin, but will not so much as smell of a feather which falleth from the hawk; he abstaineth from appearances of evil; he dares not come near the brow of the hill, so far is he from falling to the bottom. Thus the sanctified man useth all means for the murdering of his sins.

Now, reader, consider, how is it with thee? Hast thou applied these several particulars to thyself? What sayest thou? Is it thy endeavour by every providence, and thy end in every ordinance, to mortify thy corruptions, and to bring those traitors to execution? Is it thy design to cover sin, or to kill sin? Dost thou pray against sin, as Augustine confessed he did before his conversion, as one afraid that God should hear thee, and grant the request, not of thy heart, but of thy lips? or is the death of thy sins the very desire of thy soul? An unconverted man may put up many prayers, but no desires against sin.

An unregenerate person fighteth against sin, as the Athenians

against Philip of Macedon,[1] with words rather than with swords. Or as some that openly prosecute the law against a malefactor, and yet favour him underhand; so this man makes a show of pursuing sin unto the death, accusing, arraigning it, witnessing against it in prayer, and desiring judgment; but inwardly he so minceth the matter, taketh off the edge of the evidence against it, as one resolved that it shall live; his expressions cry out of sin, as the Jews of Christ, Away with it, away with it, it is not worthy to live, let it be crucified; but his affections call with much more ardency, as Pilate, Why should it die? what evil hath it done? we find no fault in it, or at least, as Augustine's heart, Not yet, Lord, not yet. A little longer he would willingly laze upon the bed of lust: a little more slumber, a little more sleep, saith this spiritual sluggard. Truly, all this show of warring against sin, is but false fire, which, you know, can do no execution.

Fencers, at a prize, sometimes ply one another so home, and strike so hard, that they seem to be in earnest, when they are all the while but in jest; their intentions are to please the people, and thereby to advance their profit, by getting a little money, but not at all to wound one another, at least not dangerously; a slight wound possibly may happen. Thus unsanctified men combat with sin; they seem by their praying, reading, hearing, to aim at its death, to be in earnest, when indeed their intentions are to carry on their own interest; and their resolutions, that however they may raze sin slightly, for their own ends, not to wound it deeply. Friend, I know not, but God knoweth, whether it be thus with thee or no. Dost thou by civility, by the performance of duties, by attendance on ordinances, tell the world that thou wouldst crucify thy corruptions, when such a thing is not in thy retired thoughts? as Caligula with banners displayed, battle ranged, trumpets sounding, set his soldiers to gather cockles. Or dost thou enter the list against thy lust, as David against Goliath, reckoning to kill, or be killed, resolving, through the help of heaven, the ruin of the uncircumcised Philistine?

Is the fight between thy judgment and thy will—between thine enlightened conscience and thy affections? or between the spirit and flesh, the law in thy mind, and the law in thy members, the regenerate and the unregenerate part?

Dost thou hate and fight against sin as sin, and so against every sin? for all true hatred is against the whole kind.[2] Dost thou loathe

[1] Livy.

[2] πρὸς τὰ γένη.—*Arist. Rhet.*

it as much when it riseth in thy heart, as when it rageth in thy life? in thy dearest friends, as in thy bitterest enemies? It was said of Anthony that he hated a tyrant, not tyranny; dost thou abhor the disease or the patient? canst thou say, as David, 'I hate every false way'? Ps. cxix. 104. Universality in this is a sure sign of sincerity. Herod spits out some sins, when he rolls others as sweet morsels in his mouth. A hypocrite ever leaves the devil some nest-egg to sit upon, though he take many away. Some men will not buy some commodities, because they cannot have them at their own price, but they lay out the same money on others; so hypocrites forbear some sins, yea, are displeased at them, because they cannot have them without disgrace or diseases, or some other disadvantage; but they lay out the same love upon other sins, which will suit better with their designs. Some affirm, what the sea loseth in one place, it gaineth in another; so what ground the corruption of the unconverted loseth one way, it gaineth another. There is in him some one lust especially which is his favourite; some king-sin, like Agag, which must be spared when others are destroyed. 'In this the Lord be merciful to thy servant,' saith Naaman. But now the regenerate laboureth to cleanse himself from all pollutions, both of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1. Grace is like Cæsar, who would admit of no superior; nay, like oil, it will allow of no mixture. Sin may be in the saint as rawness and illness in water, but the fire of grace worketh it out by degrees, sending it forth in the scum. The least drop of water is contrary to, and opposed by fire, as well as the full vessel; so the least sin is contrary to, and opposed by grace as well as the greatest. The shepherd's dog forceth the whole flock to fly, but hath a special eye to one sheep, to which he is directed by the staff or a stone from the shepherd. Or as the hounds, saith a divine, drive the whole herd of deer before them, yet have a special eye to one deer which is singled out by the dart of the huntsman, that however others may escape, yet that shall be killed; so regeneration, though it work in the soul a detestation of, and a resolution against, every sin, yet the severest exercise of this hatred and opposition is against the man's beloved and delightful sin, resolving, however others should escape, yet this shall be put to death. As the Syrian commanded his soldiers to fight neither against small nor great, but against the king of Israel, so truly the bent of the sanctified heart is most against this royal king-sin, as that sin whereby God hath been most dishonoured, and his soul most deeply wounded.

Ambrose relates a story of a dog, whose master being slain by

one of his enemies, he lay by him all night, with great lamentation, howling and barking. In the morning many came to see the dead corpse, amongst whom was the murderer; the dog no sooner saw the homicide, but presently fell upon him.[1] Friend, is thy greatest hatred and anger against thy Saviour-and-soul-murderer, that master-sin in which thou didst formerly take the greatest pleasure? Canst thou say, as David, (observe that character of uprightness,) 'I was upright before him, and kept myself from mine iniquity'? Ps. xviii. 23. Mark, 'from mine iniquity.' The godless man, though he do much, will be sure to fail here; and the godly man will strike home here, wherever he be favourable. A horse that is not sound, but foundered, will favour one foot, if not more; the lapwing, some observe, will cry, and make a great noise, but it is when she is farthest from her nest; the hypocrite may keep a great stir about many sins, but there is one sin which he meddleth not with. There is, saith a learned divine,[2] no greater argument of unsound repentance, than indulgent thoughts, and reserved delight and complacency in a master-sin. As some grounds are most proper soils to breed and nourish some particular weeds, so are some men's hearts for some particular sins: as Cain's for envy, Korah's for arrogancy, Pilate's for cowardliness, the young man's for covetousness; and this sin is ordinarily the greatest block in the way of conversion; rather than men would leave this sin, they have lost salvation, Mark x. 22; John xii. 42, 43. The devil holds them as fast by this one link as by ten thousand. As it is with a rabbit's skin, it comes off very well, till it come to the head, and then there is hauling and pulling, and much ado before it stirs. So the creature may do much at the command of God, but there is old stir and pulling before this sin be separated from him; if this be once done thoroughly, the man is converted truly, for nothing but a saving work, can cause a man to loathe that sin which he loved as himself; and therefore an unconverted person will ever be false in this. Jehu may throw down the idolatry of Baal, but not the calves at Dan and Bethel. The young man in his worldliness, Herod in his uncleanness, Balaam in his stubbornness, must be excused. The converted soul is in this most careful; as Cranmer, he will put that unworthy right hand first in the fire, with which by his subscription he had so much dishonoured Christ and religion. Mohammed the Great, first emperor of the Turks, cut off his fair Irene's head with his own hands, in whom he had so exceedingly

[1] In Hexam., lib. vi. cap. 4.

[2] Dr Reynolds on Hosea xiv., Serm. 3.

delighted, to assure his bashaws that he had rather promote the public peace and good, than please and satisfy his own passions.[1] The true Christian is a far greater conqueror, and, out of love to God and his own salvation, obtains a more lawful and noble victory over the mistress of his affections. He knoweth no sin, be it never so near or dear to him, worth hazarding the loss of God's favour and his eternal welfare for. And therefore though his sin be an Absalom, concerning which corrupt nature, like David, gives a special charge, Spare the young man Absalom: deal gently with him for my sake; he seeth, like Joab, that the way to scatter the army of lusts is to slay the general, this commander-in-chief. And therefore he resolveth to make sure work of him, and for that end takes three darts and strikes him through with them all, when one would have done the deed.

Reader, I confess I have been much larger in this head than I intended; but if thou examine thine heart faithfully and prudently by it, thou wilt have no cause to be sorry for it. I have read that it was wont to be the way of trial, whether land belonged to England or Ireland, by putting toads or serpents, or other venomous creatures, into it. If they lived there, the land belonged to England; if they died, to Ireland. Sure I am thou mayest try whether thou at present belongest to heaven or to hell, to a covenant of works, or to the covenant of grace, whether thou art converted or unconverted; if venomous lusts do live in thee, thou art English land, in a state of nature and wrath; if they die daily in thee, thou art in Christ, and belongest to the land of paradise. Yet I would not be understood as if I meant that godly men are never overtaken with sin, or that corruption never gets the better of them. For I know that the purest on earth are holy but in part; they are like watermen rowing hard against the stream of corruption, but, through a sudden and violent blast of temptation, they may be driven backward. But observe, this is violent, against their fixed and deliberate resolutions; their obedience to the law of sin is forced as to a usurper, not free as to a liege lord. Ahab indeed sold himself to sin, 1 Kings xxi. 20, but Paul was sold under sin, Rom. vii. 14. The former was a volunteer and agent, the latter a pressed man, a mere patient. Augustine setteth out the difference between sin in the regenerate and unregenerate by a comparison of Tarquin and Lucretia,[2] where, speaking of her ravishment, there were, saith he, two bodies, but one guilty of adultery, and concludeth

[1] Turkish History.

[2] Peccatum factum est de illa, non ab illa.—*Aug. de Civit. Dei.*

the sin was committed upon her, not by her. Consonant to which is that of the apostle, 'For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do: now if I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,' Rom. vii. 15, 20. The converted person, like the betrothed virgin, is forced; he crieth out, and therefore in God's account is innocent. Our committing sin will not speak us unsanctified, but our submitting to it will.

Secondly, There is in this new creature, as a dying to sin, so also a living to God in all ways of obedience, Rom. vi. 11. As the old man is put off, so the new man is put on; besides the expulsion of sin, there is the infusion of holiness. A habit or principle of grace is bestowed on the soul, whereby it breatheth after, exerciseth and delighteth itself in, the ways and worship of God; there is an inward frame and disposition infused into the new creature, different from, nay, contrary to, his former inclinations: the stream of his heart and life before ran swiftly after the flesh and the world; the creature sat upon the throne in his inward man, commanding all things at pleasure; earth was the man's heaven; the world lay in his heart, and all the man's affections and actions were ordered and disposed for the advancement of that interest. But now the tide is turned, the waters run in another channel; the Lord is exalted in his affections, as his chiefest good, and in his conversation as his utmost end; the law of God is written in the heart, and commented upon in the life; the inward man is of a good constitution, and the outward man of a good complexion. Grace is a tendency of the soul God-ward; his understanding knoweth God to be the greatest good, John xvii. His will chooseth him, his affections love him, his desire is after him, his delight is in him, his fear is of him, his trust is on him, his care and endeavour is to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, John xvii. 3; Ps. xvi. 5, 6, and lxxiii. 25, 26; Isa. vii. 8; Ps. xxxvii. 4; Gen. xlii. 18; like the sun-flower, he followeth the motion of the Sun of righteousness.

Now reader, try thyself; art thou alive to God? Dost thou take him in Christ for thy happiness, and make him thine end? Is it thy business and trade to do his will, thy calling and employment to finish his work? Is thy heart devoted to his fear, and thy life to his honour? How art thou affected to his word and worship? Dost thou perform duties out of love to God, with complacency in God? Is it thy meat and drink to obey his precepts? How is thy soul ravished with the sweetnesses of his promises? Art thou

joyful in the house of prayer? Is the Sabbath thy delight? Is the Scripture sweeter to thee than the honey and honeycomb? At the sacrament, canst thou sit under Christ's shadow with great delight, and find his fruit sweet unto thy taste? Dost thou esteem the yoke of thy Saviour easy, his service liberty, his ways, 'ways of pleasantness, and all his paths peace'? Canst thou say, 'One day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere'? Hast thou found that it is good for thee to draw nigh to God? If thou wert put to thy choice, hadst thou rather solace thy soul with sensual recreations, or in communion with the Father, and Jesus Christ his Son? Examine thine heart; for if thou hast the divine nature, divine and spiritual things will be natural, and so pleasant to thee. A man whose nature is covetous, how exceedingly doth he delight in viewing and feeling money! as the Roman emperor would put off his clothes and tumble up and down in heaps of silver. If a man's nature be proud, how exceedingly pleased is he in the cap and the knee, in being flattered and respected! it is meat and drink to him, as we say, to be reverenced in men's carriage, and honoured in their language; men love those things alife, because they suit with their natures: so when a man hath a new nature, a spiritual holy nature, things which are spiritual and holy will be acceptable to him, because they are suitable to his nature; the word will be welcome, prayer will be pleasant, ordinances will be as savoury as food to the hungry; the man will love 'the habitation of God's house, and the place where God's honour dwelleth'; though his flesh be weak, his spirit is always willing. He may be weary *at* a duty, that the wheels of his soul should be clogged with the dirt of infidelity, and make him drive so heavily, but he is never weary *of* duties; though corruption and Satan now dog him at, and disturb him in, his performances, yet it is the comfort of his soul that he now drags them in chains after the triumphant chariot of grace; and he rejoiceth to think how he shall leave the body of death behind him, at the entrance of his soul into the Capitol of glory. His heart leaps now, when his feet do but creep in the way of obedience; when he goeth to the house of God, it is with the voice of joy, unto the altar of God, yea, his God and exceeding joy.

Whatsoever a man doth from an ingrafted propensity, he doth it not only in sincerity, but also with alacrity; he delights in it as the fish in the water, as the mole in the earth, it is his proper element; God and the things of God are his element; he would still be and live in this element. He delights to know God, to worship

him, to believe in him, to meditate on him, to sanctify his day, to glorify his name, to observe his laws, to view his children; he is never so well as when he is walking with God. If there were no heaven to prefer the obedient, and no hell to punish the disobedient, yet he would fear the Lord, and delight greatly in his commandments.

But on the other side, speak, friend, art thou listless and dead to spiritual things? are they irksome and tedious to thee? Probably the commandments of God are bonds and cords; the Sabbath thy toilsome day, not a day of rest and refreshment; the sanctuary is thy prison, the service of God is snuffed at by thee, and wearisome to thee; thou art glad that the duty is done, the day is over, thy conscience quieted, like a tenant who is glad his rent is paid to his landlord, but took no pleasure in parting with his money; thou rejoicest at the end, not at the beginning of thy duty; thou countest *Amen* the best word in a prayer, not because it is the fruit of thy faith, but because it puts a period to thy petitions; the blessing is the best part of divine worship; thou esteemest no part to be before it, because that is last, and nothing comes after.

Religion is but possibly thy by-business, and a lackey to thy lusts, a pass and a convoy which thou hast need of in thy travelling through the world. It may be thou goest to duty as a bear to the stake; it goeth against the hair with thee to walk in the way of holiness, though necessity compel thee, sometimes, or once or twice a day, to take a turn in the path of piety: conscience will roar unless it may find rest in some outward performance.

Or thou mayest now and then perceive good company walking in the narrow way which leadeth to life; and so, as travellers care not if they go a mile or two out of their way for company, especially if the way be fair, and the company pleasing; so thou mayest go out of thy own way sometimes, and walk a little with the saints for company.

Reader, be faithful to thy soul. A real fire differeth from a painted one by its heat; and so doth the real from the painted Christian by his heat, life, and delight in the service of God. If thou art alive to God, thou art given up to all the laws of God; thou exercisest thyself therein to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and men. If thou art a Christian indeed, the image of God is imprinted on thee; now this image consisteth in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Righteousness conforms thy heart to the whole second table of the moral law; holiness conforms it to the whole first table, and knowledge completes this conformity

to both. The regenerate man is not maimed; no part of the new man is wanting: he cuts not off the garments of holiness in the midst. Agrippa may be half a Christian, Herod may do many things, but Zacharias and Elisabeth walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and David will fulfil all the will of God, Luke i. 6; Acts xiii. Perfect holiness is the reward of the saints in heaven, but it is the desire and endeavour of the saints on earth: 'Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy commandments'! As a resolved traveller that is upon a journey of necessity, whether the way and weather be fair or foul, he goeth on, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, until he appear before God in Zion. He lifteth at the latch when he cannot open the door; he hath respect to all God's commandments. He obeyeth every law of both tables in his will, though he break the law of both tables in his works. As the hearts and wills of the Athenians were with Sylla without the walls, when they were besieged by him, and kept in their bodies within by force, so the saints are with the whole law in their hearts and intentions, even then when they are forced to fail, in regard of their hands and execution, Rom. vii. 13, 14. Paul's three adverbs speak a substantial Christian, Tit. ii. 11.

Some are first-table men, zealous for religion and duties towards God, but cold and careless in point of righteousness and justice in their dealings with men; others are second-table men, very just and righteous towards men, yet mind not religion towards God. But the true Christian is complete in all the will of God, Phil. iv. 12. Integrality is the true note of integrity. The philosopher saith that deceit lieth in universals [1]; the divine saith that sincerity lieth in universals. 'We trust,' saith Paul, 'that we have a good conscience, because we desire in all things to live honestly,' Heb. xiii. 18.

A hypocrite is like some books, of little worth, because they are imperfect—something is wanting. Those commands which will suit with his ends shall be taken in his way, as Jehu did the precepts which enjoined the rooting out of Ahab's family; but those which cross his designs must be cast by, as that precept to Jehu of rooting out the idolatry of Dan and Bethel. Thus this unconverted person indents with God, as some servants with their masters. This work he will do, and this work he will not do; and thus, while he breaks one command resolutely, he breaks all reductively. The commands of the law are all copulative; they hang together

[1] Dolus latet in universalibus.

like a carcanet of jewels—break one off, and all fall with it; or as one article of a lease being broken, the whole lease is forfeited. He that breaks one with resolution and confidence, obeyeth none out of conscience. He that disobeyeth God wilfully in one command, shall find that he disobeyeth God wholly in all. 'He that keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all,' James ii.

Reader, if thou shouldst sit at table, and see a man piddling at his meat, picking and choosing—this he liked, that he disliked—thou wouldst conclude, surely some ill-humours are predominant in him, his body is unsound. So, when thou art piddling at the table of the word, picking and choosing among the commands of of God—this thou likest, it is easy; that thou dislikest, it will cost thee some pains, or tend to thy discredit—mayest thou not gather that corruption is too much prevailing in thee, and thy soul is unsound? Be it known unto thee that thou art a traitor against the King of heaven, if thou clippest or refusest any piece which hath his impression and superscription.

Secondly, Examine thyself by the effects of regeneration. I shall name three effects of it, by which I would request thee to search and try thy soul.

First, The new-born child desireth and savoureth the means of grace. The unconverted man, being dead spiritually, hath no appetite to, nor taste of, spiritual food; but the living child hath both: 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word,' 1 Pet. ii. 2. The babe of grace, as soon as born, doth cry for the breast. He can no more live in his soul without duties, than in his body without diet. The infant-heir preferreth his milk before his largest manors. A famine of the word pincheth and paineth him more than a famine of bread and water. David's banishment from the temple was his sorest trouble, and a far greater affliction to him than his forced absence from his dearest relations.

Oh the hunger of this gracious soul after Scripture! 'I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments,' Ps. cxix. 131. The big-bellied mother doth not long more than this new-born child. The poor prisoner doth not beg more heartily for bread, than he for spiritual food, Ps. xlii. 1, 2, and lxiii. 1, 2. A divine observeth[1] excellently on that fore-quoted place, 1 Pet. ii. 2, a threefold difference between the bad and good in their desires of the word.

1. The regenerate desires the word as the babe doth milk. How is that? He desires it as his livelihood when he is new-born,

[1] Dr Harris on New Heart.

though afterward he is more playful, and every noise may call him off from the breast; but when new-born, nothing can satisfy but the breast. So a hypocrite may desire the word when there is nothing to call him; but when the world and the word come in competition, he will follow his earthly, whatever become of his heavenly, business; but a new-born child prefers it before thousands of gold or silver.

2. The new-born child desires the word in its plainness—the sincere milk of the word, without mixture, as the child desires the mother's milk without sugar; whereas another desires the word in its gaudy dress, lofty language—partly out of pride, scorning the simplicity of the gospel; partly out of cowardice, because the naked sword of the word, drawn out of its gaudy scabbard, pierceth deepest.

3. The new-born creature desires the word for a good end, that he may grow thereby in grace and holiness; another man may desire it that he may grow in ability to discourse, or the like; but this man that he may grow in faith, love, and sanctifying graces. Besides, hunger being his sauce, makes the word sweet to him: 'He esteemeth the word of God's mouth more than his appointed food,' Job xxiii. 12. Mark, not than varieties, or superfluous fare, but than daily and necessary food. The former might be spared, but this, for the preservation of life, is necessarily required; but God's word was before this. Spiritual dainties are most delightful to them that have special grace. And, truly, it is no wonder that the child doth so exceedingly long for, and love that which is, as it were, his father: 'I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me,' Ps. cxix. 93. Some men say they shall never forget such a friend the longest day that they have to live. What is the reason? They will tell us they were nigh death, either by fire, or water, or some disease, and, under God, such men saved their lives. So saith David, 'I will never forget God's law the longest day I shall live.' Why? What is the matter? Alas! I was nigh death, next door to eternal damnation; there was but a thin paper wall of life between me and everlasting woe, and, under God, the word helped me—it saved my soul; I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me. If Alexander could say that he was more bound to his tutor Aristotle than to his father Philip, because he had only his being from the latter, when he had his well-being from the former, and therefore he prized him so much; how much, therefore, doth the true Christian value that word, which is instrumental to his being in Christ here, and his everlasting well-being with Christ hereafter?

So for prayer, the regenerate person cannot live without it, and fellowship with God in it. He is like a full vessel—his heart filled with complaint against sin, with longing after Christ and his likeness. If you will not give it vent, it will burst. Prayer is his breathing Godward. Without breathing the body could not live—it would be inflamed and burnt up with the heat of its own entrails; no more could the soul, unless the saint should breathe often towards heaven, crying, Abba, Father. Spiritual breath was the first sign of Paul's spiritual birth: 'Behold, he prayeth,' Acts ix. 11.

So I might speak of other ordinances of God, for there is a constant trade driven between the convert and heaven, which is carried on by several commodities, and if this commerce were broken off he could not subsist. He findeth the means of grace as needful to keep grace and soul together, as meat to keep life and soul together. His heart, though fired with this spiritual life, is like green wood, which will burn no longer than it is blown with the bellows of ordinances.

Reader, how dost thou find thine appetite unto the bread and water of life? Dost thou hunger after the word, prayer, sacraments, communion of saints, and the Lord's day? Canst thou feed on them with delight? Dost thou rise from table with an appetite, longing to sit down again? Canst thou say, as the psalmist, 'I watch, and am as the sparrow upon the housetop'? Ps. cii. 7. Observe, the sparrow upon the top of a house looketh on this side and that side of the house, it looketh this way and that way, and round about, if he can spy any corn and food; and when it can see any, it flieth to that place and pecks it up. So dost thou watch for, and resort to the ordinances of God, which are the food of thy soul? What sayest thou? It may be thou art for high language, oratorical expressions, such sermons only are pleasing to thee. The dish must be set out with many flowers, on which thou lookest more than at the meat. Believe it, as there is no greater sign of a foul stomach than to loathe solid meat, and to pick salads or feed on ashes; so there is hardly a greater sign of an unsanctified heart, than to loathe the solid food of the word, and to pick the flowers of man's wisdom in a sermon, or to feed on the world.

Or possibly thou art one of the newfangled opinionists of our unhappy times, that are above ordinances. I must tell thee that to live above ordinances is to live below a saint. He that doth not reckon the means of grace his greatest privilege on this side the

place of glory, may well question whether ever he enjoyed God in them. Methinks the beggar should know that door again at which he had a large alms, a full bait, James i. 18, 19; 1 Pet. ii. 2–4. A child, indeed, may forbear his meat, either in a fit of sullenness, or under some disease; but if he be a child, his dogged fit will be over, he will get the mastery of his distemper, and fall to his food again.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing more marks of a regenerate person.

Secondly, The new-born creature groweth in grace; the picture of a child groweth not, but a living child doth. After generation followeth augmentation; the same word which breeds the new man, feeds him, and enables him to grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2. As the same blood, of which the babe is bred in the womb, strikes up into the mother's breasts, and by a further concoction becometh milk, and so nourisheth it: the good seed of the word falling into the soil of an honest heart makes it abundant in the work of the Lord. Common grace sometimes, like Joshua's sun, standeth still; but usually, like the dial of Ahaz, it goeth ten degrees backward; when special grace, like the morning light, shineth brighter and brighter to perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. First the blade, next the ear, then the full corn: first they who are begotten of God become little children, next young men, then old men and fathers, 1 John ii. 1, 12–14.

The unsound Christian is like the manna for the Israelites' daily use, which did corrupt and putrify; or like a pond of water which quickly drieth up; when true Christianity, as the manna in the ark, doth keep sweet, and, as the waters of the sanctuary, is up first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and at last became a river so deep that none could pass over it, Ezek. xlvii. 3–5.

If grace be true, there is a natural tendency in it to growth, as there is in seed cast into the earth. There is virtually in a little plant the bigness and height of a great tree, towards which it is putting forth itself with more and more strength every day. So there is in that seed of grace, planted in the soul at conversion, virtually that perfection of grace which Christ hath appointed that man unto, towards which it is putting itself forth every day: 'He

that hath clean hands, groweth stronger and stronger,' Job xvii. 9. 'They go from strength to strength till they appear before God in Zion,' Ps. lxxxiv. This river of living waters runneth along, notwithstanding many turnings and windings, till it empty itself into the ocean, and grace commence glory.

The grain of mustard seed groweth into a tree, and the smoking flax is blown into a flame. The least spark of true holiness cannot be put out by all the blast of men and devils; but will, like the coal-fire, wax the hotter for the waters of opposition, and never leave aspiring till it be joined, and become a pure and perfect flame.

He was never good man that mends not, saith that holy bishop;[1] for if he were good he must needs desire to be better. Grace is so sweet, that whoever tastes of it must needs long after more; and if he desire it, he will endeavour it; and if he do but endeavour, God will crown with success. God's family admitteth of no dwarfs which are unthriving and stand at a stay, but men of measures. Whatever become of my body or my estate, I will ever labour to find somewhat added to the stature of my soul.

The children of God are therefore compared to trees which are thriving and profitable: as to the fruitful vine, the fat olive, the seasonable sapling planted by the rivers of waters, for he abideth in Christ; and whosoever abideth in him bringeth forth fruit, John xv. 4. The branch which seemeth to belong to the vine, by hanging on it, yet is dead, will wither and perish; but that which is alive in the vine will partake of its sap, and thereby thrive and flourish.

Indeed all Christ's scholars are not of the same form. All gracious men are not of the same growth. As in the natural body some parts have more beauty and strength than others, so in the mystical body of Christ, one member may be more eminent in spiritual strength than another. God doth not give grace as he did manna, by the homer; one star differeth from another in glory; but though all the children of God are not of the same strength and stature, yet they are all thriving children; and, as some write of the crocodile, they grow while they live. As all pieces of land are not alike fruitful, some bring forth thirty, some sixty, some an hundred-fold; but all the good grounds are fruitful, and return the seed with advantage; every one bringeth forth some fruit.

It is confessed, also, that a true Christian doth not grow at all

[1] Hol., Medit. and Vows, p. 7, medit. 44.

times alike. A violent wind may force those waves for some time backward, whose natural motion is forward. Nature's retraction of itself from a visible fear, upon a sensible danger, may make the pulse of a Christian, that beats truly and strongly in the main point, the state of the soul, to intermit and faulter at such a time. Peter was far from thriving when he denied his Master, first with bare words, and then with curses and oaths; and so was David from growing, when he first commits adultery in person, and afterwards murder by a proxy. But mark, as children under a fit of sickness grow not at present, but after their recovery shoot up the more for it; and as trees stand at a stay in winter, but in spring shoot forth to purpose; so the child of God, though he may have his declensions, yet afterwards he recovers himself, and his distemper being removed, he falls to his food, and gets strength apace; nay, the greater his fall was, the greater his rise; the lower the ebb and decrease, the higher the tide and increase; as we see in Peter, who though he denied Christ out of cowardice, came afterwards to own him with courage, and that to the loss, not only of his liberty, but his very life.[1] And David, who could once imbrue his hands in another man's blood, would not afterwards drink of that water, the fetching of which had but endangered blood.

Reader, how dost thou find thine heart to thrive in holiness? Dost thou, like a dead stake in a hedge, grow, but it is every day more rotten? or dost thou, like a living tree, grow bigger and better, extending in the branches, and increasing in fruit, from the sap which thou derivest from Christ thy root? Art thou like those seducers which Paul speaks of, that grow worse and worse, like a carcase, more unsavoury every hour than other? or dost thou, like the moon, always increase in the light of purity, till thou come to the full of glory? Art thou ever pressing forward towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ? or dost thou slide backward with a perpetual backsliding? Art thou one of them that boast they are still the same, as loose, as deboist as ever—no changeling, unless it be from one lewd company, or loose course, to another? like the cameleon, thou canst turn into any colour but white; into anything but what thou shouldst be. Truly, thou art far from the kingdom of heaven.

Friend, let conscience speak, Was the time with thee when thou couldst not suffer half a day to pass without duties, nor a duty without communion with God in it? thou didst constantly either

[1] Euseb.

meet God, or miss God, in an ordinance; thou couldst not hear an oath, but thou wast sensible of God's dishonour; nor speak an idle word, but thou wast fearful of divine displeasure? God and thy soul, like two intimate friends, did walk together? And is it now otherwise? canst thou neglect prayer and the word, and never be troubled at their want? or, if thou mind any performance, art thou indifferent whether or no God affords his presence? canst thou hear others lash out with their lips, and give thyself liberty for vain and frothy language, yet none of these things move thee? O friend, consider whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; for surely it is sad to see the days grow shorter and shorter, to see a body wasting away every day more and more of a consumption. And how sad is it to see a soul declining in regard of spiritual strength! If thou fall forward, thou mayest help thyself; but if thou fall backward, as old Eli did, thou mayest undo thyself; thy fall may prove thy downfall. Remember that a vessel of true gold will wear brighter and brighter to the last, when a cup which is only gilt will grow paler and paler till all the gilt be off. Take heed thou be not like an apple, fair on the outside, and rotten at core; for then thou wilt corrupt further and further, till thy outside be like thine inside, and God discover thee to be unsound all over.

Thirdly, The new-born creature endeavoureth to make others gracious. All living creatures have a tendency and inclination to beget others, and propagate their own kind. Adam, when polluted, begets a son after his image; truly, so doth the Christian, in his desires and endeavours, as soon as he is purified. No sanctified soul did ever make a monopoly of his Saviour; like the wall, he receiveth warmth from the Sun of righteousness, and reflecteth it on them that are near him.

A hypocrite, which hath no true grace himself, careth not how little others have. He is like a dead coal, whatever be nigh him is never warmed or quickened by him; but the sincere soul wisheth that all were altogether as he is, and, as a live coal, he kindleth others.

All good is diffusive of itself, and the more of goodness in any, the more of diffusiveness. If Peter be converted, he will strengthen his brethren; if David be reduced, he will teach sinners God's ways. None are more desirous of children than they who have God for their father.

The true Christian, that hath tasted God to be gracious, and found good entertainment at his table, cannot but commend his

house-keeping to others, and advise them to accept of the same cheer.

As the sun refresheth many with his warm rays, especially them that are near it, so doth the saint benefit many by his fervent prayers for them, occasional counsels and constant pattern to them, but especially those that are of his own family. There indeed are his most cherishing beams, and enlivening influences. Oh how diligent is he that the King of saints may have his throne in every heart within his house! Like the bee, he goeth to the flower of this duty, and to the flower of that ordinance, sucking some honey, some soul-sweetness, and then carrieth all home to his hive, to his family. He will study and strive that his cottage may become a church, his house God's lesser heaven. It is a mercy to be his wife, he will labour that Christ may be her husband; it is a happiness to be his children, he will endeavour that God may be their father; it is a privilege to be his servant, he will do his utmost that such may be heirs of salvation. His house is a healthful air for the souls of others to breathe in.

Grace, like fire, cannot be hid; you may as soon conceal musk in your hand as grace in your heart. The turning of a sinner from evil to good, is like the turning of a bell from one side to another, which reporteth its own motion. The convert is resolved, as Elijah, to shew himself; and in this among the rest, in bringing more customers to that shop where he had such cheap and kind usage.

The devil was no sooner fallen but he laboured to draw man to the same wickedness and wretchedness with himself; the dead in sin are no sooner raised to spiritual life but they endeavour to draw others to the same holiness and happiness with themselves. 'These things I write unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship,' which is the only good fellowship, 'is with the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son,' 1 John i. 3.

The child of God eateth not his morsel alone, but loveth company; he is very covetous to make proselytes unto Christ. We have a saying, that he was unworthy to be born, by whom another is not born. Sure I am, he may question whether he were ever born again, that doth not labour that others may be so also.

Reader, try thyself by this touchstone; art thou a heavenly merchant to engross spiritual commodities to thyself? or art thou desirous that others should share with thee? Is the voice of thy heart like Cain's? 'Am I my brother's keeper?' or like Moses', 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.' Canst thou stand by

and see others lose their God, and Christ, and souls for ever, and not to be at all troubled, so thy stakes are saved? or dost thou, with Darius, labour hard to keep poor creatures from the roaring lion? Dan. vi. 14; and with Abraham pray heartily that poor Sodomites may be preserved from fire and brimstone? Is it all one to thee whether thy neighbours and relations sink or swim, be sinners or saints, be saved or damned? truly then it is a sign thou art not born of God; for wert thou his son, thou wouldst endeavour, by thy prayers, pattern, and precepts, to raise up seed to thine elder brother Jesus Christ.

Reader, it is far from my thoughts to disown or discourage the least degree of grace.[1] I know that the embryo in the womb is reckoned towards a child; the break of day a part of the day. A palsy-shaking hand is a true hand, and may receive a jewel as surely, though not so steadily, as another hand; a weak hand of faith is a true faith, and may receive the pearl of price as certain, though not so cheerfully, as a strong faith. If thy desires after these particulars be sincere, and accompanied with suitable endeavours, it will speak much for thee. I am not bringing thy graces to the balance to weigh them, that I may know their quantity and degrees, and how rich thou art; but to the touchstone, to try them, that thou mightst know their quality and truth, whether thou art poor in spirituals or poor in spirit; whether thou art worth anything or nothing, for thine endless estate in the other world.

To sum up this use, I would request thee to be so great a friend to thy precious soul, as to be impartial and faithful in its search and trial. Look much at the constant bent and inclination of thy heart. One act will not speak a habit, nor a few good or bad motions a holy or evil heart. Thou mayest have same cogitations of heaven, when thy conversation is not in heaven. The air is light, yet not a lightsome body, because it is lighted by the presence of another; when that is removed, it is dark, as in the night. So, if thy light of holiness in any of the forementioned particulars be only like a flash of lightning, for a fit, it is a sign the root of the matter is not in thee. On the other side, thou mayest be in the right way to heaven, though thou art sometimes stopped and hindered in thy journey. A stream or vent of a river may be to go downward, yet the river may be dammed up for a while, but it will rise higher and higher, and at length beat down and overcome that which hindereth it; so if the tendency of thine inward man, its ordinary frame and temper, be but towards God and the

[1] Credo, Domine, vera fide, etsi languida fide.—*Œcolampad.*

divine nature, be not discouraged, though there may be the mud of corruption to stop the stream; for this living water of grace will be so beating upon it, that it will overpower it, and ride triumphantly over it. But be sure that thou bring the matter in debate to an issue; by no means desist till thou bringest it to some result. If Satan can but persuade thee either to daub about it, (for his speech will be like that of Peter to Christ, 'Master, pity thyself,') or to leave the question still in doubt, he knoweth that he shall spoil the working of all this physic, be it never so good. I know that thine heart will be as hard to be kept to it as an eel in thine hands; therefore serve thine heart, as the judge serveth the jurors at an assize. First they are sworn to be true and faithful in deciding and determining the difference between party and party; next they hear the evidence and proofs on both sides; after that they are shut up together, and have neither fire, nor candle, nor bread, nor drink allowed them, till they are agreed on their verdict, which when they have done, they bring it into the court, and there it is entered and recorded. 'Go thou and do likewise.' When thou art got into thy chamber, first make thine heart to engage and promise, before the Judge of the whole earth, that it will, through the strength of Christ, be true and faithful in determining this weighty controversy between God and thy soul, whether the land of promise belong to thee or not; next let conscience be called, which is as ten thousand witnesses, and speak what it knoweth of thy right and title to that estate, according to the known laws of the Lord; and if thou lovest the life of thy soul, do not wink upon that witness, or fee him underhand, to make him mince the matter, and be partial in his testimony. Foolish pity here is soul-damning cruelty; but tell him he is upon his oath, and in the presence of the infinite God, and charge him to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Oh do but give conscience leave to be faithful at this time, and it will be thy friend to eternity. When the evidence is thus examined, let nothing hinder a verdict; call upon thy heart again and again, whether it be resolved for thee or against thee; till this be done, give thyself no rest; if one day will not serve, take two; never give over till it come to an issue one way or other. Of what infinite concernment is this to thee, when all that thou art worth for the other world dependeth on it! When thou art agreed of a verdict, let it be entered and engrossed in the court of conscience—namely, that such a day thy title to the inheritance of the saints in light was tried before the judge of quick and dead; and upon a full hearing of evidence on

both sides, such or such a verdict was brought in. If thy heart find for thee, how may this fill thee with joy, that thy name is written in the book of life! it may keep thee steady in greatest storms, that thou art an undoubted heir to the eternal weight of glory. When the waters of affliction overtake thee, and the devil throws his stones into them to trouble them and make them muddy, that thou mayest doubt and distrust thine eternal felicity, how quickly may the remembrance of such a verdict upon full evidence settle them again! and how clearly mayest thou see thy sincerity, like a true diamond, sparkling gloriously at the bottom of those waters! thou mightst gather, Once in Christ, and ever in Christ; and I was once in him, therefore I can never be out of him. O friend, thy privileges are high and unspeakable, and therefore thy practices should be holy and answerable. But I cannot stay to speak further to thee here; my work groweth in my hands already much beyond my thoughts; yet I shall speak to thy dignity and happiness in the second subject of consideration, under the first use of exhortation; and to thy duty and holiness in the second use of exhortation, if the book swell not too big.

But, reader, if thine heart find against thee, that thou art not born again, what canst thou say for thyself why sentence of eternal death should not be awarded and executed upon thee according to law, yea, according to the gospel? Hast thou read the reasons of the doctrine, and the first use of information, and dost thou not see the absolute, indispensable necessity of regeneration in all that would be saved? Hath not the God of truth, as it were, confirmed it with an oath, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God'? Canst thou think to make the author of this text a liar, by getting to heaven in an unregenerate condition? Dost thou believe that the thoughts of his heart stand for ever, and the counsels of his majesty be established to all generations? Suppose thou shouldst die this day, (alas! how many diseases attend thee! the feet of those that carried others to their long homes are ready to carry thee also,) good Lord, what will become of thee for ever, ever, ever? Art thou able to dwell in everlasting burnings? canst thou endure unquenchable flames? For the sake of thy precious soul, hasten out of this Sodom, this natural estate, which will undoubtedly be punished with fire and brimstone. For thine help herein I have written the next use, which I earnestly beseech thee, as thou wouldst leave this world with comfort, and look into the other world with courage, that thou give it the reading,—'thou knowest

not what an hour may bring forth,'—and the Lord give it his blessing!

CHAPTER VIII.

Containing an exhortation to endeavour after regeneration.

Thirdly, This doctrine may be useful by way of exhortation, and that to two sorts of persons.

1. To the unregenerate. If without regeneration men and women can never obtain salvation, then it exhorteth thee, reader, if in a state of nature, to mind and labour for this second birth, as ever thou wouldst escape the second death. Dost thou not perceive by the word of the living God, that except thou art converted, thou canst in no wise enter into the kingdom of God? Mat. xviii. 3. Alas! what then is like to be thy case, shouldst thou die in this condition? Assure thyself that all thy friends and lands, honours and pleasures, yea, all the help which this whole world can afford thee, cannot keep thee one quarter of an hour out of hell.

This law, this standing law of heaven, that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, is like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. By their law, that which was written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's seal, might no man reverse, Esther viii. 8. Friend, is not this written, not only in the name, but with the very hand of the King of kings, 'I say unto thee,' and sealed with his own seal, 'Verily, verily'? and dost thou think, poor worm, to reverse it, to turn the truth of the eternal God into a lie? I tell thee, and I would speak it with reverence to the highest Majesty, that God himself cannot do it. It is his perfection, that it is impossible for him to lie, Titus i. 2. His hand cannot but make good what his mouth hath spoken. His will and word have joined regeneration and salvation together, and his faithfulness and truth will not suffer them to be parted asunder. Therefore think of it timely, and turn to God truly, otherwise there is a necessity of thy perishing everlastingly.

Thou dost not know, as strong and lusty as thou art, how soon death may come behind thee, and throw thee; and oh it will be thine eternal overthrow; though, as on Sodom, thy morning be sunshiny, yet thou canst not tell how soon it may overcast; nay, it may be followed with flakes of fire before night. Sure I am, that

God hath given thee no lease of thy life, and that others have died of the same age and likeliness to live; and why thou shouldst promise thyself a privilege beyond others, that thou shalt live longer, I know no reason, unless this, that the devil and thine own heart have conspired together to murder thy soul, by getting thee to future and put off thy conversion till thou comest to hell fire, and then thy ruin will be past remedy. Suppose the same voice should come to thee which did to Hezekiah, 'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live,' meaning speedily, what wouldst thou do? Thy house is not in order, thy soul, man, is all out of order, and therefore death would come to thee, as Abijah to Jeroboam's wife, with heavy tidings, with such news as Samuel brought to Eli, which will make thy ears to tingle, and thine heart to tremble. Ah, how will he do to die, that never knew how to live? The black usher of death will go before, and the flaming fire of hell will follow after. Didst thou but believe the word of God as much as the devils do, thou couldst never depart this life in thy wits, who hast not led thy life according to God's will.

One would think the noise of this murdering piece, of this great cannon, death, though it should not be very near thee, might awaken and affrighten thee; when that deluge of wrath cometh, that the fountain of fury from below is broken up, and the flakes of fire from above are rained down, thou hast no ark, no promise, no Christ to shelter thyself in; for regeneration is the plank cast out by God himself to save the sinking sinner, by bringing him to the Lord Jesus; and thou wantest it. Dost thou not see that thy sentence of death, if thou continuest so, is already passed in the high court of heaven, entered and engrossed in the book of Scripture? and God knoweth how soon the word of command may be given to some disease for thy execution.

What comfort, therefore, canst thou take in all the creatures, while thou wantest this new creation? It is reported of Xerxes,[1] the greatest of the Persian monarchs, that when the Grecians had taken from him Sardis, a famous city in Asia the Less, he commanded one every day at dinner to cry before him with a loud voice, Sardis is lost, Sardis is lost. It seems to me that thou hast far more cause to have a friend without, or conscience within, to be thy monitor, every day and every meal to sound in thy ears, Friend, thy soul is lost, thy soul is lost.

Certainly, such a voice might mar thy greatest mirth, sauce every dish with sorrow, make thy most delicate meat a medicine, and thy

[1] Plutarch in Vit. Themist.

sweetest drink distasteful to thee. Oh, didst thou but know what it is to lose thy soul, thy God, thy Christ, thine heaven, and all for ever, thou wouldst in the night be scared with dreams and visions, and in the day be frighted with fears and terrors.

When Uriah was bid by David to go down to his house and refresh himself, he answered, 'The ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and drink, and lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing,' 2 Sam. xi. 11. Mark, the good man could take no pleasure in relations or possessions, because the natural lives of others were in danger; nay, he forswears the use of those comforts for that very cause. How then canst thou solace thyself with lying vanities, when thine eternal life is, not in jeopardy, but lost really, and thou canst not assure thyself one day for its recovery!

Shouldst thou see a condemned prisoner, which knoweth not whether he shall be hanged on the morrow, or the day after, hawking or hunting, sprucing himself, or sporting with his jovial companions, what thoughts wouldst thou have of such a man? wouldst thou not think, surely this man is mad or desperate! were he not beside himself, he would mind somewhat else, since he is so near his end. But, friend, turn thine eyes inward, and see whether there is not infinitely more reason why thou shouldst wonder at thine own folly and madness, who art by the word of the dreadful God condemned, not to be hanged, but to be damned; not to the gallows, but to the unquenchable fire, and canst not tell whether this night, or to-morrow morning justice shall be done upon thee, and yet thou art buying and selling, eating and drinking, pampering the perishing body, never minding or thinking what shall become of thy poor precious soul to eternity!

The wise man's advice is, that if thou art indebted to men, and liable to their arrest and imprisonment, thou shouldst not give sleep to thine eyes nor slumber to thine eyelids before thou hast made thy peace, Prov. vi. 1–4. What speed shouldst thou then use, when thou art infinitely indebted to the Almighty God, (at his mercy every moment, liable continually to be arrested by that surly sergeant death, and by him to be hurried into the dark prison of hell,) to agree with thine adversary while thou art in the way; and to get the black lines of thy sins crossed with the red lines of Christ's blood, and so for ever blotted out of the book of God's remembrance! As the chamberlain of one of the Persian princes

used to say to him every morning, Arise, my lord, and have regard to the weighty affairs for which the great God would have you to provide; so say I to thee, Awake, O man, out of thy carnal security, and have regard to the great end for which thou wast born, and the great errand for which the great God hath sent thee into the world.

Reader, that thou mightst avoid the endless woe of the damned, and attain the matchless weal of the saved, I shall do two things in the prosecution of this exhortation. I shall both give thee some helps towards regeneration, and remove some hindrances.

First, I shall offer thee three helps unto holiness, and thereby unto heaven.

Secondly, I shall answer three objections which probably may arise in thy heart.

If thou hast any real desire after thine eternal welfare, ponder them seriously, and practise them faithfully, and the good Lord make them successful! Oh how happy might it be for thee if the getting of a regenerate nature were the main task of thy whole time! believe it, thou wilt have no cause to repent of it.

For the helps towards regeneration, and thereby towards salvation.

CHAPTER IX.

The first help to regeneration, serious consideration.

1. The first help which I shall offer thee is, serious consideration. He that goeth in a wrong path, and never thinketh of it, will not return back, or turn about, though the farther he goeth the greater is his deviation and danger. A serious consideration of the evil and end of thy way were a cheap prevention of eternal and endless woe. Observe, I say, consideration; consideration is an act of the practical understanding, whereby it reflecteth upon its actions and intentions, and comparing them with the rule of the word, proceedeth to lay its command upon the will and affections to put what is good in execution.

This was hinted by chewing the cud under the law, and the beasts which did not were unclean; and indeed it is the excellency of a man above a beast that he may, in a rational discursive manner, meditate on things that concern his salvation, and, by chewing the cud, get some nourishment to his soul. It is a pondering the

sayings of Christ, Luke ii. 19. It is to the soul what digestion is to the body; it is not the quantity of meat, but a good digestion, which nourisheth and strengtheneth the body. For they which eat much and cannot digest it, instead of repairing, they ruin nature. So it is not the great knowledge of the truths of God, but the serious consideration and practical application of them, which nourisheth and strengtheneth the soul. Without this, men's knowledge, be it never so much, is but like rain in the middle region, or fire in the flint, unprofitable, and to no purpose at all.

I say, serious consideration; the thoughts must dwell upon divine weighty truths. Surely men, if they should do thus, would undo all they have done; but when the thoughts of God and Christ, and sin and holiness, death and judgment, heaven and hell, pass speedily through them, as travellers through a country, making no stay, no wonder if they cannot give any account of the worth and virtue of them. It is not the hasty shower, but soft snow, which soaks deep; whilst the former goeth off as fast as it comes on, the latter gently creeps into every chink of the ground.

It is with the truths of God as with a salve; if a man have never so precious a salve, which will help a dangerous mortal wound in twelve hours, and he do nothing but lay the plaster, which is spread with this salve, on the wound, and take it off presently, it will never heal the wound; if ever it eat out the corruption and cure the sore, it must lie on some considerable time together; the best salve under heaven will not otherwise do the wounded man good. So if a man turn his thoughts upon the loathsome nature of sin; the unspeakable danger of sinners; the misery that he is liable to whilst he continues carnal; the mercy that he might obtain if he were spiritual; the all-sufficiency of God; the excellency of godliness; the purchase of Christ; and the promises of the gospel; every of which is a precious medicine to cure soul maladies; yet if his thoughts do not stay upon them, if they are only glancing thoughts, off and on, like lightning flashing on the conscience and away, they will never heal thy spiritual diseases. That messenger which would despatch business of weight and concernment must not call at a door and then be gone, but he must go in, sit down, and make some stay there.

This serious consideration, friend, I propound to thee an excellent receipt for the recovery of thy dying soul. 'I considered my ways,' saith David, 'and turned my feet unto thy testimonies,' Ps. cxix. 59. Some translate the original, I looked on both sides upon my ways, I considered them every way, 'and turned my feet

unto thy testimonies.' I considered that I was wandering like a lost sheep, and then I returned.

Conversion beginneth at consideration: 'Because he considereth, and turneth from all the transgressions which he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die,' Ezek. xviii. 28. The mariner who is running his vessel against a rock, if he consider it, and steer another course, he doth thereby prevent a desperate shipwreck.

When David would stop the enemies of God in their full career of wickedness, he layeth this block in their way, 'Commune with your own hearts, and be still,' Ps. iv. 4. Self-communion is one special help to sin-confusion and sound conversion. The prodigal came to himself before he came to his father. He considered what a fool he was to feed with swine upon husks, when he might eat bread as in his father's house; he considered what a madman he was to feed on the short commons of the world, and endure the slavery of the devil, when he might feast on the exceedings of the gospel, and enjoy the liberty of the children of God. After this serious consideration he cometh to this solid resolution, 'I will arise and go to my father,' Luke xv. 17, and accordingly went, and was welcome.

Truly, reader, it is inconsiderateness that doth both defile thee and damn thee; the want of consideration causeth men to abound in sin.

'The people committed falsehood; the thief cometh in, the troop of robbers spoileth without,' Hosea vii. 1. There was ground full of weeds; but mark, the reason was, because it lay fallow; it was not ploughed up with consideration. 'They consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness,' ver. 2. They consider not that I remember and record all their omissions, commissions, the corruptions of their hearts, transgressions of their lives, and write them down with a pen of iron and point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1, and will bring them forth in the day of slaughter. As the foolish bird Pliny speaks of, called struthiocamelus, which thrusts her head into a thicket, conceiving that nobody seeth her because she seeth nobody, and so becomes a prey to the fowler;[1] so the adulterer, the thief, the drunkard, and the like, consider not that God seeth them plainly, hateth their sins perfectly, can turn them into hell presently; and thereby become bold in wickedness; they hide God from themselves, and think that they are hidden from God. 'They consider not in their hearts that he remembereth all their wickedness.'

[1] Plin., lib. x. cap. 1.

Friend, when thou seest a man in a frenzy, or one in bedlam, tearing their hair, biting and cutting their own flesh, what dost thou say? Surely this man wanteth the use of his reason; could he but use that, without question he would never do thus. May not a gracious man that beholdeth thee tearing, lancing, stabbing, and wounding thy precious soul with worldliness, swearing, atheism, or uncleanness, upon as good ground say, Surely this man wanteth consideration; did he but consider what a jealous God he provoketh, what bowels of love he spurneth at, what a hell of sorrow he provideth for his long home, he would never do thus! The ostrich leaveth her eggs in the dust, not considering that the feet of the passenger will crush them to pieces, because she is deprived of wisdom and wanteth understanding, Job xxxix. 14, 15, 17. The sinner leaveth his soul naked, and liable to all dangers imaginable, because he is void of true wisdom, and liveth without this serious consideration, Isa. i. 2–5. They consider not the conclusion, and therefore are confident in the commission of sin. 'They consider not their last end, therefore they come down mightily,' Lam. i. 9.

A divine writeth well,[1] how subtle Satan is to hinder men's consideration. Satan, saith he, is very jealous of the sinner, afraid every Christian that speaks to him, or ordinances he hears, should inveigle him; by his good-will he should come at neither. No, nor have a thought of heaven or hell, from one end of the week to the other; and that he may have as few as may be, he keepeth him full-handed with his work. The sinner is grinding, and he is filling the hopper, that the mill may not stand still. He is with the sinner as soon as he wakes, and fills his wretched heart with some wicked thoughts, which as a morning draught may keep him from the infection of any savour of good that may be breathed on him by others in the day-time. All the day long he watcheth him, as the master would do his man, that he fears will run away. And at night, like a careful jailer, he locks him up again in his chamber, with more bolts and fetters upon him, not suffering him to sleep as he lieth on his bed, till he hath done some mischief. Ah, poor wretch, was ever slave so looked to? As long as the devil can keep thee thus, thou art his own sure enough.

Now, as that father said of the gospel, that it must needs be excellent, because Nero prosecuted it with so much violence; so this consideration must needs be an excellent help to holiness, because the devil doth prosecute it with such implacable hatred; if he can keep this door of thy soul shut, he feareth not Christ's

[1] Gurnal's Armour, part i. p. 222.

entrance into thy heart. I have sometime read of a religious father, that had a deboist lewd son, that was a great grief to him; when the father was on his death-bed, he made this son to promise him that he would be every day of his life half an hour alone by himself. The son, making some conscience of his solemn engagement to his dying father, used afterwards to retire himself daily for that space of time, where at first he busied himself vainly, in thinking of the honours and delights of the world; but afterwards he began to consider what end his father had in binding him to such retiredness, and then thought of his own folly, in wandering from God, and embracing a dying and lying world; and the Spirit striking in with those meditations, he became a new man. Oh that, reader, thou wouldst go and do as he did! Is it not an easy remedy? If God should require ten hours every day to be spent in secret, about thy soul and salvation, I profess to thee I know not how thou couldst spend thy time better, or so well. I am sure it were worth the while. O friend, to be amongst devils in everlasting torments, or with Christ in everlasting pleasures, are other manner of things than thou canst imagine; but I do request of thee, on the behalf of God and thy soul, but one half-hour every day, that thou wouldst retire thyself into thy chamber, or closet;—the beautiful bridegroom is bashful, and cometh seldom to his church, Cant. iv. 11, or any Christian in a crowd;—and there consider seriously of some things which I shall from the Lord propound to thee. Let not the cheapness of the receipt make thee refuse it; thou seest sometimes that simple herbs, that grow in our own gardens, cure those distempers which costly drugs fetched from far cannot. As the general's servant said to him, when he raged and fretted at the counsel of the prophet for the cure of his leprosy: 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather when he saith, Wash, and be clean,' 2 Kings v. 13; so say I to thee, if I should request more time in a day, if I should desire far greater things of thee, for the killing of that leprosy, which otherwise will kill thee, wouldst thou not do it? Ah, didst thou but know the price of a Christ, thou wouldst sell all to buy that pearl; didst thou but know the wrath of a just, holy, and infinite God, thou wouldst do anything, all things possible, to escape it. How much rather when I desire only one half-hour in a day for serious consideration. If thou wilt not do it for the avoiding of hell, dost thou not deserve to burn for ever. Think of it, reader, whoever thou art, I am very loath to leave thee before I have prevailed with thee; dost thou not squander away many an hour vainly, nay, sinfully, in working out

thy damnation? and wilt thou not spare one half-hour in a day to work out thy salvation in? How many years hast thou spent in the service of thy brutish flesh? and is half an hour in a day, when thou art not sure to live a week, too much for thine angelical spirit? What sayest thou? wilt thou promise thy Maker and Redeemer that thou wilt do this? whose advantage is it like to be; thine or mine? 'If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself; but if thou art a scorner, thou alone shalt suffer,' Prov. ix. 12. Well, if thou wilt not grant me this little time, thou art like to grieve for thy refusal eternally. And truly if thou wilt hear God in this, I have hopes that he will hear thee in far greater: 'Set thine heart, therefore, to all the words which I speak unto thee this day, for it is not a vain thing, but it is for thy life,' Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

I shall, upon presumption that thou wilt for thy soul's sake use that cheap help of consideration, assist thee, by laying down five particulars, as subjects of thy most serious thoughts; and I know not one of them but hath such weight, that when thou art considering, if the blessed God vouchsafe a meeting, it may do the work.

CHAPTER X.

The first subject of consideration, the misery of the unregenerate in this world.

First, Consider the misery which thou liest under, or art liable to, whilst thou art unregenerate.

And were I but able to charge and discharge this great gun fully, it might probably fire thee out of all thy sinful holds, and force thee to seek unto Christ for help. But as the Roman said of his fellow-citizen, that he was beyond all expressions wicked; so may I say of thee, that thou art beyond not only all expressions, but all conceptions, wretched. No ink is black enough to describe those dismal clouds of fury under which thou livest in this world. But oh, what tongue can tell the thousandth part of those fiery torments to which thou art liable in the other world!

While thou livest thou art a cursed sinner; and when thou diest thou shalt be a damned creature.

While thou livest thou art a cursed sinner; that roll of curses twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad, is thy right, Zech. v. 4. Thou art a breaker of the law, and out of Christ, and therefore an heir of the curse and wrath of the Lord.

The curse of God hangs every moment over thine head; like a blood-hound, it followeth thee wherever thou goest; as thy shadow, it accompanieth thee whatever thou dost; thou art continually under the droppings and spouts of the Almighty God's indignation, and canst as soon fly from thyself as from it, till thou art regenerated.

Thou art cursed in all thou hast. Whether they are natural, civil, or spiritual enjoyments, they are all cursed to thee.

For thy natural parts, thy wit, memory, knowledge, head, heart, are all cursed to thee. They are employed in the service of Satan, and with them thou fightest against God and thy soul. As Jehu against his master, so thou marchest furiously against thy Maker with his own soldiers. Thy memory is Satan's treasury, thy will an agent for hell, thy carnal mind enmity against God: the handmaids of thy affections, like Hagar, crow over their mistress, and make even thy reason a slave and lackey to thy sensual lusts; all thy natural endowments are Satan's ornaments. And as the more sharp and keen the weapon is, the more mischief the murderer doth with it; so the more witty thou art, the more wicked thou art, thy wisdom being 'from below, earthly, sensual, devilish,' James iii. 15.

For thy civil advantages, thy wealth, credit, house, delights, friends, are all cursed to thee. Thy riches make thee the greater rebel, and thereby further thine eternal ruin. Thy fulness breeds forgetfulness. Where the richest mines are, the earth is most barren. Thy wealth is like fuel to feed thy wantonness.

Thine honour, like wind, puffeth up the bladder of thine empty heart with pride. The more God lifteth thee up, the more thou castest him down; the respectful breath of thy neighbours doth but blow the vessel of thy soul towards hell.

Thy pleasures are prejudicial to thy precious soul. Like the wasp, thou drownest thyself in those pots of honey; and as the silly fish, swimmest merrily down the silver streams of Jordan, till thou fallest into the dead sea and perishest.

Thy relations and friends, if wicked, are cursed to thee; they breathe on thee, and thou takest the infection, wanting this preservative of regeneration. They are actually what Michal was to David, intentionally in regard of Saul, snares unto thee.

Thy house is cursed: 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked,' Prov. iii. 33. Whatever cost be there, there can be no true cheer, for there is God's curse, which mars all; this will either rot the timber, and pull it down, or undermine the foundation, and

blow it up. Possibly there may be in thine house a loving wife, lovely children, many servants, stately rooms, costly furniture, dainty fare, great earthly delights; but, man, the curse of God is there. A spoonful of this, like copperas, will turn all thy wine into ink; thy sea of honey into gall and wormwood. How can thy sweetest dish be savoury, when the curse of God is thy sauce? Or thy most sugared cup be pleasant, when the curse of God lieth, like a toad, swelled at the bottom? or thy finest raiment delight thee, when in every suit there is the curse of God, like a plague-sore? or how can thy most beautiful building content thee, when this curse of God on thee for thy wickedness turns it into a prison to keep thee, who art in the bond of iniquity, till the hour of death, the time of thine execution?

There is a place which some speak of in the West Indies, where there is extraordinary luscious fruit growing, but the inhabitants are so scorched with the heat of the sun by day, and multitude of gnats stinging them by night, that they cannot either eat or digest their sweet meats with any comfort; for which cause the Spaniards call the place, *comfits in hell.* Reader, what delight canst thou take in thy table, though it be spread with various earthly enjoyments, when every dish is served in with the scorching wrath of God, and stingings of a guilty conscience? As a feast to him that sat under a naked sword, as wine to a condemned malefactor, as Dives' dishes followed with the unquenchable fire, so are all the comforts of this inferior creation to an unregenerate person.

Thou art a curse to thy children. It is ill to have relation to thee, who art under the indignation of God: 'The seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned,' Isa. xiv. 20; so Job v. 3, 4. If thy children are good, thou art their grief; if wicked, thou wilt make them worse. The best of them may smart temporally for thine iniquities. When the body of the tree falleth, the branches fall with it, Exod. xx. 5; and oh how much more is it to be feared that thou wilt draw them after thee both to sin and hell!

It is not safe to be thy neighbour. If it be ill to dwell near him whose house is on fire, surely it is not good to be nigh him who is under God's fury. When an overflowing storm sweepeth away the wicked, the tail of it may dash at their best neighbours. Though they shall not perish with thee, yet they may smart for thee.

Thy name is cursed: 'The name of the wicked shall rot,' Prov. x. 7. Thou mayest be honourable in the esteem of thy graceless neighbours, but thou art contemptible in the account of Christ and his members; and whenever thou diest, thou wilt go out like a

candle, leaving behind thee a stinking savour in the nostrils of the saints.

Thy calling, whatever it be, is cursed; thine earthly employment proves a heavenly impediment: 'Thou art cursed in the city, and cursed in the field; cursed in thy basket, and cursed in thy store; cursed in the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land, and increase of thy kine, and flocks of thy sheep; cursed when thou comest in, and cursed when thou goest out. The Lord will send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto, until thou be destroyed and perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken the Lord,' Deut. xxviii. *init. et per tot.*

As thy natural parts and civil advantages, so also thy spiritual privileges are cursed to thee, till thou turnest from sin. Thou enjoyest sermons, sacraments, Sabbaths, seasons of grace, and, like the spider, suckest poison out of those sweet flowers. Roses, some say, kill horse-flies. Is it not sad that those precious mercies should hasten and increase thy misery! Thine unregeneracy, like some desperate disease, turneth those medicines which are administered to cure it, into the nourishment and confirmation of the sickness itself; the word of God is the savour of death unto death unto thee, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Thou surfeitest of that bread of life, than which no surfeit is more dangerous; thou growest black and wanzy in the sunshine of the gospel; the table of the Lord is to thee the table of devils; the leaven of thy unregeneracy turneth that passover into pollution; Christ himself is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, 1 Pet. ii. 8. This Sun of righteousness, which the sound eye of the regenerate beholds with much pleasure, is not beheld by thy sore eyes without much pain. The Red Sea of his blood, through which the true Israelites pass safely into the celestial Canaan, is destruction to thee, being an uncircumcised Egyptian: 'The very grace of God is turned by thee into wantonness,' Jude 4.

Thou makest sour vinegar of that sweet wine, and makest use of those gales to help thee to hell, which were sent to help thee to heaven: 'Unto thee who art unbelieving and defiled is nothing pure,' Tit. i. 15. As the earth hath the greatest cold in the bottom of it when the sun shineth on it with the greatest heat to qualify it; so is thine heart dead and cold under all the warm influences of ordinances.

What a dreadful condition art thou in, that those privileges which are choice blessings to others should be cursed to thee, and greaten both thy sin and suffering! The fruit of those trees which

stand in the sun, groweth greater than of those which grow in the shade; so do thy sins under the gospel of Christ wax greater than those which want it, Mat. xi. 21–23; Heb. x. 28, 29.

And as these sacred advantages increase thy corruption, so also thy destruction. When the physic which should remove the distemper co-operates with it, it brings death with the more speed and pain. No creature more terrible than fire, and no fire so terrible as that which is taken from the altar: 'Take fire from the altar, and scatter it over the city,' Ezek. x. 2. They thought the fire of the altar had been only for the expiation of sin, but God makes them know that it was for the desolation of their city.[1]

But thou art not only cursed in what thou hast, but also in what thou dost.

All thine actions, whether inward or outward, whether worldly or religious, are all sinful and cursed. Like the leper under the law, thou taintest whatever thou touchest, and makest it unclean. Thy thoughts, the first-born of thy soul, and thy purest offspring, are all vain. Thine heart is a sink of sin, an ocean of corruption; and therefore is ever sending forth and bubbling up mire and dirt: 'The imaginations and thoughts of thy heart are evil, only evil, and that continually,' Gen. vi. 9. Thy words are wicked; the inward wheels of thy spirit being disordered, the clock of thy tongue cannot strike true. The inward dunghill reeketh, and sendeth forth its stench much this way: Rom. iii. 13, 14, 'Thy mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; the poison of asps is under thy lips; thy throat is an open sepulchre,' like a grave when opened, sending forth noisome and stinking exhalations.

Thy calling is not without its corruption: 'The ploughing of the wicked is sin,' Prov. xxi. 4. Thy very eating, drinking, sleeping, buying, selling, whatever thou dost is evil. Though such actions are indifferent in themselves—for all indifferency lieth in generals—yet, as done by thee from wicked principles, and for wicked ends, they are stark naught. Nay, thy very religious actions are sinful and unacceptable to God: 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord,' Prov. xv. 8. Thine incense stinks of the hand that offereth it, therefore the heart of God cannot away with it, Isa. i. 13–15; and lxvi. 3. The vessel of thine heart is not clean, and God will not taste of the liquor which cometh out of it. Because thy person is not accepted, thy performances are all rejected: 'Thou art in the flesh, and therefore canst not please God,' Rom. viii. 8. Thy duties are done without heart or heat,

[1] Calvin *in loc.*

and being dead carcases, without spiritual life, must needs be unsavoury.

Thus, man, art thou miserable who art in a state of nature—thine unregenerate heart being like some filthy fen, or as some write of the lake of Sodom, which continually sendeth up poisonous vapours. Oh, into what dangerous dilemmas doth thine unregeneracy bring thee! If thou enjoyest the means of grace, by abusing them thou increasest thy misery, Heb. x. 28. If thou neglectest them, thou leavest thyself without remedy, and perishest unavoidably, Prov. xxix. 18; Rom. x. 15. If thou art in prosperity, the sunshine thereof doth but ripen thee for ruin, as the sun the grape, for the winepress of the Lord's wrath, Prov. i. 31; Ps. lxix. 22. If thou art in adversity, the fire thereof doth but harden thine heart of clay, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. Thy misery, as Plutarch writes of drums to tigers, maketh thee mad;[1] thou frettest like one in a frenzy, 2 Kings vi. 33, against the Lord. If thou rejoicest, thy laughter is from the teeth, outward. Is not thine heart many a time heavy, when thy looks are lively? Prov. xiv. 13. Doth not conscience, when thou, like Belshazzar, art carousing in thy cups, spread forth a handwriting before thee, a black list of thy sins, and God's wrath, which turneth all thy mirth into mourning? At best thy laughter is but like crackling of thorns under a pot, which maketh a short blaze and bustling noise, and then vanisheth into smoke and ashes, Dan. v. 5, 6; Isa. lvii. 21. If thou weepest, thy tears are puddle-water, and so thy worldly sorrow here but a pledge and earnest of thy sufferings hereafter. If thou livest long, thou heatest hell the hotter, every day 'treasuring up wrath upon thine head against the day of wrath,' Rom. ii. 5. If thou diest soon, thou makest the more haste to hell, taking a short cut to thy long and doleful home.

If thou lookest upward, thou mayest see God frowning, and his wrath revealed from heaven against thee, Rom. i. 18. Thou mayest behold, as it were, the heavens and their host ready every moment to discharge God's curse like a thunderbolt upon thee. If thou lookest downward, thou mayest see hell gaping, as the earth did to Korah, and opening its mouth wide, to swallow thee up quick. If thou lookest within thee, thou mayest see conscience, which thou hast abused, as the Philistines did Samson, by putting out its eyes, causing it to grind at the devil's mill, and making sport with it, resolving, when it shall recover its strength, to be avenged on thee, and to make thee perish, though it perish with

[1] Plutarch, lib. de Superstis.

thee. If thou lookest without thee, there is no sight but what may call thee to sighs and sobs. If thou lookest upon the creatures, are not they armed with stings and murdering instruments on the behalf of their Creator, and always ready to let fly at thee, who art a rebel against his Majesty? If thou lookest into Scriptures, there is a table richly spread, which they that are born of God sit at, with adoption, remission, peace, love, the purchase of Christ, the comforts of the Spirit, which thou, as the unbelieving lord, mayest see, but shalt not so much as taste of. Thou mayest see a cherubim there with a flaming sword, to guard that tree of life, and keep thee out of that pleasant paradise. Nay, thou mayest behold there the plagues and judgments, the pain and punishments, which the righteous God threateneth against, and will execute upon thee and all in thy condition. In a word, thou mayest, as it were, find thy very self mentioned in the forlorn hope for hell, 1 Cor. vi. 6, 9, 10; Rev. xxi. 6, 7.

While thou livest, thou art fed like a beast by a common providence, and art a mere stranger to all the saving promises. If at any time thou fingerest the unsearchable riches in Christ, like the riches which Solomon speaks of, they make themselves wings and fly away from thee; thou goest every day without thy guard, being turned naked into the wide world amongst legions of devils and soul-damning lusts, to be rent and torn in pieces, like a silly hare amongst a pack of hounds, and none to shelter thee, or call them off. Many dangers attend thee every day, many miseries every moment. When thou goest out or comest in, liest down or risest up, still are those frightful hell-hounds watching for thee, and waiting only for leave from God, (oh that his long-suffering might be unto thee salvation!) to drag thy soul into the lake of fire. There is but a hair's-breadth, as it were, between thee and hell.

And oh, when thou diest, man, what wilt thou then do? As soon as that captain, death, strikes the first stroke, whole armies of woes will fall upon thee.

Reader, I have told somewhat of thy lamentable portion in this life, though none can give thee a full inventory of thy personal wretched state. One would think that every line under this head should be as a dagger stabbing thee at the heart, and that if there were nothing else but these small guns—I call them so comparatively—of miseries in this world, the fear of them should cause thee to fly, as the distressed dove, to the clefts of the rock, the wounds of a crucified Christ. But this is not all; the murdering-piece, the great ordnance, is yet behind. I must hasten to write of thy misery

in the other world, which thou, poor wretch, though now without fear, yet art hastening to feel.

As while thou livest thou art a cursed sinner, so when thou diest thou art a damned creature. Here I confess I shall fail much more than before; for no pen can describe, no pencil can delineate, —though both did it in blood, to the utmost of human wit and art, —the thousand thousandth part of that pain which thou shalt there undergo. I have read of a court where it was made death to mention death. Surely the word death must needs sound dreadfully in thine ears, because, when it comes, it will strike, and that home. It will both kill thee and damn thee. It will part thy body and soul for a time, and God and thy soul to eternity. It will send thy body to the grave, and thy soul to hell. Thy condition now is lamentable and dangerous; but then, oh then, it will be irrecoverable and desperate. Thy death's-day will be thy doomsday, wherein the guilty prisoner of the soul shall be fetched out of the noisome jail of the body, and appear before the Judge of the whole earth, and from him receive a sentence of eternal death, and then be hurried by frightful devils to execution. It is storied of Charles, king of Sweden, a great enemy of the Jesuits, that when he took any of their colleges, he would put the younger sort of them into the mines, saying, that since they had wrought hard above ground, he would make trial how well they could work under ground. Truly thus Satan will serve thee; when thou hast wrought hard for him on earth, he will pay thee thy wages in the dark vaults of hell, and make trial how well thou canst work there. Ah, who would serve such a master! Look to it, and remember that thou wast warned of it; for if thou diest naturally before thou livest spiritually, thou diest eternally.

Augustine's prayer was, Hack me, hew me, burn me HERE, but spare HEREAFTER. Spare me hereafter. Alas! what will thy condition be? Thou art in hell upon earth; for thou livest without God, whose gracious presence is heaven; and in hell, after death; thou shalt never be spared here nor hereafter. Now thou art a cursed sinner, and then thou shalt be a damned creature. Thy best is past, and thy worst to come, though thy best portion is a poor pittance, a few brutish pleasures.

CHAPTER XI.

The misery of the unregenerate in the other world.

I come now to thy misery in the other world.

Eternal death will teach thee six lessons, though now neither mercy nor misery, neither fair means nor foul means, can prevail with thee to learn them.

First, It will teach thee the vanity of this world. Thou now seest it written with the finger of God in his word, in capital letters, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' Eccles. i. 3, yet thou wilt not believe it. As it is reported of a gentlewoman, that being told so, answered, It is true Solomon said so, but he tried the world first, and so will I. Thou wilt try the world also before thou wilt trust the world; but be confident, in the other world thou wilt find God true to thy cost, when thine honour, which now is but the breath of thy neighbour, a thin cabinet of air, which every one hath a key to but thyself, shall be blown away; when thy wealth, which hath great eagle's wings to fly from thee here, shall not have so much as a small sparrow's wing to follow after thee there; and when all thy earthly comforts, for which thou sellest thy soul and thy Saviour, shall, as the pharisees did Judas, leave thee in the greatest extremity, and bid thee look to thyself.

Then possibly thou wilt say, as Cardinal Wolsey when he was out of favour with his prince, and left by him to the rage of his enemies, If I had served my God as faithfully as I have served my king, he would not have served me thus; so thou wilt think, If I had served my God as faithfully as I have served the world, he would not have served me thus, to leave me in my greatest need to the rage of scorching flames, to the fury of roaring lions, and tormenting devils; if I had served my Saviour as faithfully as I have served my sins, I should have received other manner of pay.

But for all thy faithful service to the world and thy flesh, they will forsake thee. Thou mayest then cry to the things of this world, which have so much of thy time, and heart, and trust, and which are indeed thy god, as those idolaters did to their idol-god, O Baal, hear us; O riches, hear me; O friends, hear me; O pleasures, hear me; O merry-meetings, hear me; O relations, hear me! Yea, if thou shouldst continue crying never so long, thou couldst not have the least help: were it possible for them to speak to thee when thou art in the other world, it must be the same answer

which the king of Israel gave a poor widow in her distress; 'Help my lord the king,' saith she; 'If the Lord help not, I cannot help,' saith the king; such would their answer be to thee, If the Lord help not, we cannot help. But, friend, what will thy case be when they cannot help, and God will not help! what a poor helpless creature wilt thou be for ever!

Secondly, It will teach thee the severity of the Lord. Now possibly thou knowest what the pain of the teeth is, or what the fury of a fever, or what the violence of the gout, or what the rack of the stone is, but not what the wrath of the Lord is: though these things speak it somewhat, yet thou dost not believe it at all; but then feeling will be believing. Suppose every part of thy body were as much tortured as ever thou hast felt any one part, and that for ten thousand years, how heavy would it be to bear! this were but a flea-biting to what thy body must undergo in hell. And yet the torments of thy soul will be the soul of thy torments: in the other world thou shalt know what the worm that never dieth, what the fire that never goeth out, what blackness of darkness, what to be tormented day and night, what weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, what destruction from the presence of the Lord, what the wrath of the Lamb mean, Mark ix. 43, 44; 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.

Oh, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Heb. xii. 31. His wrath is as the roaring of a lion, Amos. iii. 4; as a terrible earthquake, which makes the hills to quake, Ps. xviii. 7, 8; as the rage of a bear robbed of her whelps, Hosea xiii. 8; it is a devouring fire, the most terrible of all God's creatures. Tophet is prepared of old—for unregenerate ones it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Isa. iii. 26. Fire, which is so irresistible, that thou art but straw and stubble before it; so intolerable, that thou wilt moan and mourn, sigh and sob, under it; so unquenchable, that when it is kindled in God's anger, it shall burn to the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii.; this fire, I say, will speak a little what that great fury is which thou shalt feel. I have read, that a frown of Queen Elizabeth's killed Sir Christopher Hatton, the lord chancellor of England.[1] What then will the frowns of the King of nations do? If the rocks rent, the mountains melt, and the foundations of the earth tremble under his wrath, what wilt thou do?

When God shall with one hand strike thee according to his in-

[1] Cambden's Elizab.

finite anger, and with his other hand support thee by his infinite power, to feel the stroke of that fury, who can express or conceive what thou shalt endure? When thou considerest that the wrath of God hath thrown millions of angels out of heaven, drowned a whole world, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, opened a floodgate of matchless miseries, and let them in upon Adam's posterity, thou mayest conceive a little what it is. But when thou considerest that this cup of the Lord's wrath made Jesus Christ, who in his person was true God, when he did but sip of it, to be all over in a bloody sweat in a cold winter's night, and that in such abundance, that the clods of blood trickled down from his face to the ground, and when he drank it off, to cry out in bitterness of soul, and anguish of spirit, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' what apprehension wilt thou have of the indignation of the Lord! Well, all this must fall on thee if thou diest in this estate. How darest thou any longer to provoke the Lord to anger! art thou stronger than he? 1 Cor. x. 22. The Roman would not contest with his sovereign that could command legions. Wilt thou by sin contend with that God who can command fire to burn thee, chains to bind thee, brimstone to choke thee, lions to tear thee, serpents to sting thee, scorpions to scourge thee, darkness to fright thee, devils to rack thee, worms to gnaw thee, millions of woes to seize on thee, and hell to hold thee to feel all this for ever? Mat. xviii. 9, 10, and xxii. 13; Jude 6–12; Mark ix. 44. Ah! 'who knoweth the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, so is thy wrath,' Ps. xc. 11.

Thirdly, It will teach thee the woeful nature and fruit of sin. Now thou canst mock at mischief, and sport with sin, as if it were nothing; but, good Lord! what thoughts wilt thou have of thy most pleasurable wickedness in the other world, when the sensual delightful streams thereof shall be dried up with the scorching heat of God's wrath, and nothing left but the mud of horror and vexation! Sin dogs thee up and down all the while thou livest, as the fowler doth the flying bird; conscience will ever now and then give thee a gripe, have a fling at thee whether thou wilt or no; but when the bird settles, then the gun goeth off: so when thou art settled in thine own place, then expect the murdering piece. After thy death, the vermin of thy lusts will crawl in thee, and feed upon thee.

Thou shalt see all thy millions of sins like an army set in order, and marshalled in rank and file before thine eyes, and every one with their envenomed arrows, poisoned bullets, and wounding

weapons, set in array against thee. First original sin, the commander-in-chief, marcheth up in the front; after that, thine innumerable actual transgressions; thy carnal-mindedness, unbelief, pride, adultery, hypocrisy, drunkenness, swearing, lying, malice, hatred, envy, unrighteousness, atheism, blasphemy, profanation of the Lord's day, undutifulness to parents, unthankfulness for mercies, unprofitableness under the means of grace, incorrigibleness under afflictions; thy secret, private, public sins; thy omissions, commissions; thy personal, relative sins: all these, and many which thou never thinkest of, shall let fly whole volleys of shot upon thee.

Then thou wilt know that it is sin which hath made thee so like to Satan; that it is sin which hath separated between God and thy soul; that it is sin which hath shut heaven against thee; that it is sin which hath brought thee into hell; that though sin be delightful in the act, yet it is dreadful, it is damnable, in the end. Oh, it will be sin indeed there! Now thou walkest lightly under the weight of those grievous sins, which make the whole creation to groan; but then thou wilt feel sin to be a burden too heavy for thee to bear.

A massy piece of timber floating upon the waters, and swimming, may be drawn this way or that way by one man; but when it is once grounded, he cannot stir it, it will be so heavy: so now thou art borne up with the streams of worldly comforts, thy sins are easy and light; but when thou comest once to touch at land, at thy long home, they will be so poisonous for their nature, and so ponderous for their weight, that thou wilt cry out sadly and despairingly, what Paul did sorrowfully, yet believingly, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom. vii. 24.

The god of this world now blindeth thine eyes that thou neither seest their number nor colour; but in that long long night of blackness of darkness all those ghosts will walk, and then they will be ghastly indeed. Those arrows of sin, which now thou shootest out of sight, will then fall down upon the head of the archer.

Fourthly, It will teach thee the worth of a Saviour. When thou feelest the want of a Saviour, thou shalt know, by woeful experience, the worth of a Saviour. Sickness now probably teacheth thee the worth of health, and pain the comfort of ease. Truly those torturing pains and racking diseases, with which thou shalt be eternally affected, will teach thee, though it will be a miserable learning, the great price and worth of the physician of souls.

Jesus Christ is more worth to a saint in this world than the

whole world. If all the rocks were rubies, and all the dust gold, and the whole globe a shining chrysolite, yet he would count all but dross and dung in comparison of Christ; nay, of one hour's or moment's communion with him. But thou seest here no such virtue in his blood, no such value in his passion, no such beauty in his person, no such excellency in his precepts; but when thou shalt feel the wrath of God, the curse of the law, the torments of hell, the poison and sting of sin, then a Redeemer will be a Redeemer indeed.

Now the Son of the ever blessed God tendereth himself to thee with many entreaties, goeth after thee up and down, night and day, knocking at the door of thine heart, with all his graces, comforts, and fruits of his death, by the ministry of his word, the motions of his Spirit, multitudes of temporal and spiritual mercies; but thou, unworthy wretch, slightest both him and his precious attendants, and esteemest thy shop and stock, thy corn and carnal comforts, far before him; but when thou shalt see what a weight of glory, what rivers of pleasures, others enjoy through the Saviour, and thyself feel more torment and pain than thou canst now possibly think or fear, for want of a Saviour, surely thou wilt have other manner of thoughts of him than now thou hast.

It would be as much worth to thee as heaven, now to know Jesus Christ and him crucified; but it will be the hell of thine hell to know him there. Oh how deeply it will cut thine heart with horror to think that that Christ, whom thou shalt see at his Father's right hand, waited on thee till his head was wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, called frequently and fervently after thee, Turn, turn, O sinner! why wilt thou die, and run thus upon thy ruin? And yet thou wert as deaf as an adder, and wouldst not hear the voice of that sweet charmer.

Fifthly, It will teach thee the preciousness of time. Eternity will learn thee the value of time, when in that long evening and night, which shall never have a morning, thou shalt remember and consider that thou hadst a day of grace. Oh thou wilt think, Time was when I had the tenders and offers of all that love and life, mercy and merits, heaven and happiness, of which yonder blessed souls are possessors; when mercy came kneeling to me for acceptance, grace came a-begging at the door of my heart for admittance, it followed me to bed and board, abroad and at home, beseeching me for the love of God, for the sake of my poor soul, to turn from lying vanities to the living God. How often did the minister with many entreaties invite, exhort, beseech me to pity

my dying soul, 2 Cor. vi. 1, to leave my damning sins, and heartily to embrace my loving Saviour with all speed, assuring me from the word of the eternal God that then was the only accepted time, then was the only day of salvation! But I despised and deferred all. I thought I had time enough before me, and woe, and alas, it is now too late; the sun of my life is set, the gate of mercy is shut; I did not work in my day, and now the things of my peace are for ever hid from mine eyes. Alas, alas! poor creature, what wilt thou do in such an hour?

Now thou wantest ways to spend thy time. Were it not for the ale-house, or good fellowship, or some sinful or vain sports, thou couldst not tell what to do with thy time. Now thou esteemest it as a mere drug that hangs upon thy hand. How many a precious hour dost thou throw away, though the revenues of the whole world cannot purchase or call back a moment! but then thou wilt cry, as that foolish lady on her death-bed, who wantoned it away in her life-time, Call time again, call time again! but all in vain. When thou art once entered upon thine eternity, there can be no recalling of time.

I have read of Archias, the Lacedæmonian, that whilst he was carousing in his cups amongst his jovial companions, one delivers him a letter purposely to acquaint him that some lay in wait to take away his life, and withal desired him to read it presently, because it was matter of concernment. Oh, saith he, *Cras seria*, Serious things to-morrow; but he was slain that night.[1] So, whilst thou art wallowing in the mire of sensual pleasures, a messenger from God is sent purposely to tell thee that Satan and sin lie in ambushment to murder thy soul, and withal entreateth thee to mind it speedily, that thou mightst prevent it; but thou criest, at least in thy heart and practice, Serious things to-morrow; repentance, faith, and holiness hereafter; but before that *hereafter* come thou art in hell, and then present time will be precious when it is past.

Thou wilt then remember how exceeding careful thou wast to plough and sow thy ground in its season, and how mad and foolish to put off the ploughing up the fallow-ground of thy heart, and sowing to the Spirit, till the season of grace was past.

Sixthly, It will teach thee the knowledge of eternity, though indeed this lesson will be ever learning by thee, and never learned. Thou shalt suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7, and be tormented day and night for ever and ever, Rev. xiv. 10.

[1] Plutarch in Pelopid.

Thou wouldst not burn a whole year, no, not one day, in one of thy kitchen fires, for a kingdom. But oh, then thou shalt be in a ten thousand times hotter fire, and for ever! Ah, who can dwell in everlasting burnings! Who can endure unquenchable flame! Isa. xxxiii. 14. It is written of the lord chancellor Egerton, that going through Westminster Hall, in term-time, he saw written upon the wall, by one that was fearful he should be oppressed by a potent adversary, *Tanquam non reversurus*, as though he should never return more. Truly, when thou art once cast into that prison thou shalt never come out. As the cloud is consumed and washed away, so he that goeth down into hell returneth no more, Job vii. 9. The worm there dieth not, and the fire there never goeth out; there is blackness of darkness for ever; the smoke of thy torment will ascend for ever and ever, Mat. xviii. 10; Jude 7; Rev. xiv. 10, 11. O friend, didst thou but know what this eternity of torment is, thou wouldst howl and roar, and never rest day nor night whilst thou art unconverted. It is an age of ever living in death and pangs, and yet never expiring; a circle of sorrows which knoweth no end; an extremity of pain which shall have no period. When thou hast lain under those inconceivable torments as many millions of ages as there are creatures great and small in heaven, earth, and the vast ocean, thou shalt not be nearer coming out than the first moment thou didst go in. Now thou thinkest prayers are long, sermons are long, and Sabbaths are long, and duties are long! but how long wilt thou think eternity to be! Now thou sayest the preacher is long-winded; but ah! how long-winded will hell be, when it shall hold thee ever, ever, ever, to feel the stroke of infinite power and anger!

Thus, reader, while thou livest, thou art a cursed creature, and when thou diest, a damned sinner. In life thou art cursed in all thou hast, in all thou dost; after death thou shalt know the vanity of the world, the anger of the Lord, the woeful nature and effects of sin, the worth of a Saviour, the preciousness of time, and what a boundless, bottomless ocean eternity is. 'Consider this, ye that fear God, lest he tear you in pieces when there is none to deliver you,' Ps. l. 22.

But possibly thou, reader, though unregenerate, dost not feel this curse, nor fear this wrath, therefore thou thinkest all is safe. But answer me this question, Doth not the word of God speak more of thy misery, both in this and the other world, than I have or can speak? And canst thou imagine that thine unbelief shall

make God a liar? I tell thee the same scripture of truth which speaketh of thy misery, speaketh of thy stupidity, 1 Thes. v. 3, 4, that thou wilt even mock and scoff when thou art told of it, 2 Pet. iii. 2. Truly thy sottish senselessness is the chain by which hell's jailer holds thee so fast. The sick patient that feeleth his pain is in a hopeful way of recovery, when he that is sick and senseless is usually given over for dead.

It is observed of those that are taken with the frenzy, the disease being got into the cockloft of reason, that the more the disease doth affect them, so much the more secure they are, careless of anything, presumptuous in all things, fearful of nothing, as having lost the use of common sense.[1] So is it with thee; the more sinful, the less sensible; the more the dust of sin flies up into thine eyes, the more blind thou art now; but when death comes, it will clear up thy sight. Pliny saith of the mole, that though she be blind all the time of her life, yet when she cometh to die she openeth her eyes.[2] Truly, though now thou shuttest thine eyes, and art blind in these things, yet within a few days thou shalt come to die, and then thine eyes will be opened, and thou wilt see all these things, and very much more, as clearly as the sun at noonday.

Therefore, friend, what dost thou say now to this first subject of consideration—the misery which thou liest under, and art liable to whilst thou art unregenerate? Would any man, that were not mad, continue quiet in such an estate one moment? Ah, who would live one hour under such a torrid zone for a world? Dost thou believe, that as they whom God blesseth are blessed indeed, so they whom he curseth are cursed indeed? When Christ cursed the fig-tree, how speedy and effectual was it! The disciples say, 'How soon is the fig-tree withered away,' Mat. xxi. 19, 20. So will it be to thee as certain, though not so sudden; like a moth, it will devour thee surely, yet it may be secretly, that thou shalt take no notice of it. Let conscience speak: Art thou contented to be night and day, wherever thou goest, and whatever thou doest, under God's curse in this word? If not, then acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace, and good; a blessing instead of a curse shall come to thee, Job xxii. 21. But if thou canst bear God's curse so patiently here, not sinking under it, being kept above water with the skin-deep bladders of common blessings, yet what wilt thou do hereafter when all these shall be parted from thee? Canst thou so quietly in the other world hear that voice,

[1] Arist.

[2] Oculos incipit aperire moriendo, quos clausos habuit vivendo.

and feel the execution of that verse: 'Go, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels for ever'? Mat. xxv. 41. If thou canst not, 'Agree with thy adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,' Mat. v. 25, 26.

CHAPTER XII.

The second subject of consideration, The felicity of the regenerate in this world.

Secondly, Consider the unspeakable felicity which thou mightst enjoy if thou wert one regenerated. Thy happiness would be far greater than my tongue can declare, or thine heart desire. Blessedness is so full a word that it comprehends all the good which the rational creature can wish; and truly thou shouldst have it in its full weight. As before thou wast above all expressions cursed, so now thou shouldst be beyond all comparison blessed. Thy gleanings should be better than the most prosperous wordling's vintage; the worst estate that thou shouldst ever be in would be far more eligible than the best estate of the greatest emperor on earth that were unregenerate.

Every blessing written in the book of God would be thy birthright if thou wert born of God; thou should be blessed with the blessings of the throne and of the footstool, with all things that belong to life and godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3. No evil should come to thee: 'There shall no evil happen to the just,' Prov. xii. 21. No good shall be kept from thee: 'The Lord shall give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,' Ps. lxxxiv. 11. If earth can make thee blessed, thou shouldst be blessed: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,' Mat. v. 5. If heaven can make thee blessed, thou shouldst be blessed: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' Mat. v. 3. If all things could make thee blessed, thou shouldst be blessed: 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

Reader, I shall do my utmost so to set forth the felicity of the regenerate (which no pen can fully) that thou mayest admire it:—'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!' Num. xxv. 5;—and not only, as Balaam, desire their deaths—'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his,' Num. xxiii. 10—but also endeavour to live their lives, and to have thy conversion[1] like theirs.

While thou continuest in this world, thou shouldst be a blessed soul; and when thou enterest into the other world, thou shouldst be a glorious saint.

In this world thou shouldst be a blessed soul in every condition into which thou couldst come, in every relation in which thou dost stand, at all times and in all places whatsoever.

All the providences of God should be profitable to thee.

If God's hand were enlarged in mercy, thy heart should be enlarged in duty. If God should prosper thee in temporals, the streams of his bounty should lead thee (as the water-course, either upward to the spring, or downward to the ocean) to the source and fountain of all thy happiness. Thy heart would still be in heaven, where thy best things were, even then when thy body were busied among earthly good things, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30; Phil. iii. 19.

Some observe of the seed called henbane, that it killeth all birds save sparrows, and to them it is nourishing food; and they give this reason, because their veins are so narrow that the fumes of the seeds cannot pass through them to their hearts. Truly thus it would be with thee, though thousands of others are poisoned with their worldly portions, because the fumes thereof penetrate into their vitals; but if riches increase, thou shouldst not set thine heart upon them; nay, thou shouldst get nourishment from them. As Jehoshaphat, the more honour and wealth thou hadst, the more thy heart would be lifted up in the ways of God, 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6.

If thine estate were but little, yet it would be perfumed with love; and that lump of sugar in thy cup would make the liquor sweet, be it never so small. As the waters which flow from the hills of some of the islands of Molucca taste of the cinnamon and cloves which grow there, so should thy gift, though it were but water, taste of the good-will and special grace of the giver. Thy little, with the fear of the Lord, would be better than the riches of many wicked men, Ps. xxxvii. 16. As a little ring with a very costly diamond in it is far more worth than many great ones without it, so thy estate, though it were but a penny, should be joined

[1] Qu. 'conversation'?—ED.

with the precious jewel of that love which is better than life, and enjoyed by special promise, and thereby be infinitely more worth than the thousands and millions of others, bestowed merely from common bounty, and enjoyed only by a general providence.

If the black frost of adversity overtake thee, thou shouldst, as coneys, thrive the better; thy soul being hale, thou wouldst become thereby the more healthy. By affliction thou shouldst be partaker of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10.

The water of affliction should wash out the dirt of thy corruption; and the more they increased they would raise thee, as the flood the ark, higher above the earth, and mount thee nearer to heaven. Torches burn the better for beating; spices smell the sweeter for pounding; vines bear the more for bleeding; and the more thy soul were kept down by those weights, like the palm-tree, the more thou shouldst grow. That scouring and rubbing which fretteth others should make thee shine the brighter, Ps. xciv. 12. Divine corrections should make thee learn thy sacred lessons.

It is said of the Lacedæmonians, that when all other people were undone by war, they only grew rich. Truly thus, when ungodly ones are the worse for outward miseries and wants,—like Ahaz, in their distress they sin more against the Lord,—thou shouldst thrive the better, grow the richer in grace and good works. The diminution of thy temporal should be an addition to thy spiritual estate, Job xxxvi. 9, 10. As spring-water smoketh when other waters are dried up, because that is living and these are dead; nay, it is observed, waters arising from deep springs are hotter in winter than in summer, the outward cold keeping in and doubling the inward heat; so the waters of thy graces should not only continue, having a living principle, when the sun of calamity scorcheth and drieth up the dead ponds of unregenerate professors, Mat. xiii. 21, but also increase in spiritual heat, Job xvii. 8, 9; Phil. i. 14.

If the devil assaulted thee with temptations, they should never be for thy perdition, but probation, Rev. ii. 20. The Captain of thy salvation would so strengthen thy soul with the shield of faith and sword of the Spirit that thou shouldst not only defend thy soul from all deadly wounds, but offend thine enemy, and be more than a conqueror over principalities and powers, through him that loveth thee. It would possibly be grievous and terrible to thee to be tempted; but if God did not see it needful, he would not suffer it; nay, if he could not make it useful, he would not send it: by those thorns of the flesh he would prick the vein, and let out the rank blood of thy spirit. It is said of Telephus that he had his impos-

thume opened by the dart of an enemy which intended his hurt. Truly, so God would make to thee the fiery darts of the devil, though they were intentionally mortal, to be eventually medicinal, 1 John v. 18. The evil one should not touch thee, that is, with a mortal or deadly touch. As a sound tree shaken with the wind, thou shouldst not fall, but root thyself the faster; thou shouldst, like Samson, fetch meat out of the eater, and out of the strong sweetness; thou shouldst get honey even out of this roaring lion; thy regeneration, like pollium, would be a special preservative against the poison of that crooked serpent.

Nay, when thou shouldst fall into the evil of sin, even that should turn to thy good. God,—no thanks to thee,—like the skilful apothecary, would make wholesome treacle of such poisonous drugs. If thy corruption should at any time get the mastery, and break out in thy life, thou shouldst be so well purged by the physician of souls with the bitter aloes of repentance, that as those who have had ill-humours of their bodies getting head and breaking out in the small-pox, and do well, thou shouldst be the healthier in thy soul whilst thou livest. As a burnt child, thou shouldst ever dread that fire: thy broken bone, being once well set, would be stronger than before; thou shouldst, after thy falls, walk more dependingly on Christ, more compassionately towards others, and more watchfully over thine own heart. Compare 2 Sam. xi. 4, and xv., with 1 Chron. xi. 18, 19; Mark xiv. 29, with John xxi. 15-17.

Whatever thy condition were, it should tend to thine eternal consolation. Every wind that blew, whether the nipping north wind of adversity, or the cherishing south wind of prosperity, should neither of them wrong thee, for Christ would give them a charge concerning thee, as David his captains concerning Absalom, Do this young convert no harm, no discourtesy, but deal gently with him for my sake; yea, they should both blow a blessing to thy soul. Though the providences of God might be sometimes painful to thine outward, yet they should be always profitable to thine inward man. Infinite love would send all, infinite wisdom would temper all, and infinite power would dispose all for thy benefit: the rod would ever be in the hand of a loving Father, and therefore never used to ruin or harm thee, but ever to reform and heal thee.

As in the revolution of the heavens, every planet moveth in its proper orb, their motions are various, nay, opposite, yet by the wheeling round of the *primum mobile*, they are all brought about to one determinate point; and as the wheels of a watch, though they move contrary ways, yet all serve to carry on the end of the work-

man, to tell us the time of the day; so though the providences and dealings of God be never so cross seemingly, yet they should all tend to thine advantage really and finally, and to carry on God's design, which is thy spiritual and eternal felicity.

In a word, if afflictions did wait upon thee, if temptations watch against thee, if mercies did flow in, or by iniquity thou didst fall down, whether the days of thy pilgrimage were cloudy or clear, shining or showering, whatever weather thou travellest in towards thy Father's house; all things should work together for thy good, if thou didst once love God, and wert called according to his purpose, Rom. viii. 28.

As all God's providences should be profitable to thee, so also in all thy performances thou shouldst be acceptable to God.

When thou shouldst approach the Lord of glory, he would give thee a meeting in the means of grace; he would bid thee welcome into his presence, and warm thine heart with his spiritual influences; thou mightst hear him speaking to the solace and wonder of thy soul! 'O my dove, shew me thy face, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely,' Cant. ii. 14.

The Spirit of God would assist thee in all thy performances, enabling thee to offer up to God what came first from God;[1] and oh how exceedingly would the Father be taken with, and delight in, his own child! The fruits of the Spirit would be pleasant fruits indeed, Rom. viii. 26; Cant. iv. 16. Thou shouldst in every sacrifice give God thine heart, which he could not but take kindly at thy hands; thy prayer would be his delight, Prov. xv. 8; thy sweet breath would abundantly please him; no music could be so melodious to thee as thy prayers to him; thou shouldst never ask anything but he would grant it, either *in specie* or *pondere*, in money or money-worth. The King of heaven is not he that could do anything against thee, as that earthly king said, Jer. xxxviii. 5, 'Thy prayer should come before him like incense, and the lifting up of thine hands as morning and evening sacrifices, which his soul would smell a sweet savour in.' His eyes would be always open upon thy person with acceptance, and therefore his ears would be open to thy prayers with audience, Gen. iv. 4.

Thou, like Esther, shouldst be arrayed in thy best raiment, the robes of thy Saviour's righteousness, and so appearing in the presence of the King, shouldst find such favour in his eyes, that thy petition should be granted, and thy request performed, though it were to the half, to the whole, of his kingdom.

[1] Sozomen said of Apollonius, that he never asked that thing of God which was denied.

Thy duties should be performed with suitable graces. At a sacrament, or in a prayer, thou shouldst draw nigh to him by faith, Heb. x. 22. Know thy distance from him by godly fear, Heb. xii. 28; be made one with him by love, Job xvii. 23; which would enlarge thy heart in desires after him, and ravish thy soul with delight in him, Ps. lxxiii. 25; Job xxii. 26; and thou shouldst walk with him throughout the duty, with one foot of hope, and the other of humility.

Thus graciously shouldst thou look up to him, and he would graciously look down upon thee; little dost thou think what powerful loadstones these graces would be to draw forth his love. Observe and admire: 'Thou hast ravished[1] my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished mine heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!' Cant. iv. 9–11, to the end.

Besides, all thy performances would be perfumed by the Mediator. There would indeed still be imperfection in thy graces, which are poured by the Spirit into thy soul, as pure liquor into a foul vessel. Spring-waters, as they pass through the veins of the earth, will taste of the minerals which they there salute; so would thy gracious actions have their faults and defects, because thou wouldst have still an unregenerate part; therefore duties, as they came from thee, would not have a good savour, but Christ the angel would stand at the altar with sweet incense, intercepting thy sacrifices and prayers in their passage to heaven, purge away the iniquities of thy holy things with his own blood, perfume thy duties with his infinite merits, and so present them to his Father in his own name without the least defilement; and then, oh then, how pleasing and acceptable must they needs be to him! Rev. viii. 3, 4.

As when a servant is with a master upon liking, he doth his business so coldly and carelessly, and is so indifferent about it, that his master takes little notice either of him or his work, and all that time is lost. But when he is once bound, and the indentures sealed, and his father engaged for his faithfulness, the apprentice falls to his work with another manner of spirit; and the master now esteems it as service, carrieth himself towards him as a master, resolves to teach him his trade, and his time every day goes on. So whilst a man is unregenerate, he serveth God so coldly, hypocritically, and carnally, that God accepts it not, nay, loathes it; his performances they are as the cutting off of a dog's neck, or the offering up of

[1] Taken away my heart, or behearted me.—*Hebr.*

swine's flesh, it is lost service; but when indentures are sealed in regeneration, that the man is bound to God by a hearty dedication of himself to his service, and Christ hath given a considerable sum with him, and undertaken for his faithfulness, then the soul falls to God's business with hand and heart, and God esteems it as service, and resolves to teach him the trade of pleasing God on earth, that he may be fit to do it in heaven.

All the ordinances of God should be for thy good. If thou wert but born again, and alive spiritually, thou shouldst find the word, prayer, singing, sacraments, Sabbaths, communion of saints, to be both refreshing and nourishing food to thy soul, though now thou canst relish them no more than the white of an egg, and receive no more good from them than from a dry chip; then they would be as pipes to convey the water of life, to cheer and satisfy thy thirsty spirit. If thou wert a child weak in grace, ordinances would be milk to thee; if a strong man, they would be strong meat; though thy spiritual strength were never so small, thou shouldst find they would increase it. The Father of eternity would take care so to nurse and feed thee that thou shouldst thrive, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

As the head doth by the organs of sinews or nerves convey the animal spirits into the whole body, and with them both sense and motion, so thy head Christ Jesus would, by those organs of ordinances, convey spiritual life, sense and motion, to thee his member.

Thou mightst hear the word with much spiritual hunger, and that being thy sauce, would make thee both fall to and relish thy food. When thou shouldst hear Christ speaking to thee, and opening the Scriptures, thine heart would burn within thee, and, as metal melted, be ready for any mould which God would cast thee into.

The precepts of the word would be a light to thy feet, and a lantern to thy paths; thou wouldst love them for their purity, find them to be exceeding pleasant, and turn thy feet into those ways of peace. Thine heart would in part answer God's holy law, as the counterpart the original deed; and thou shouldst so behold the face of the Lord in the glass of his word, that thou shouldst be changed into his image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The threatenings of the word, though they portend and speak dreadful things, as Nebuchadnezzar's dream, yet those fearful and faithful dreams would belong to thine enemies, and the interpretation of them to them that hate thee. Those doleful threatenings

of God's wrath, the delivering up of souls to go on in sin, and the eternal torments of hell, like drones, will buzz about thine ears to keep thee wakeful, but could not sting thee to make thee woeful; wert thou but alive in Christ, thou shouldst be dead to the law and all its curses, Rom. vii. 4.

The promises would be precious also to thee, if thou wert converted; thou wouldst have the mouth of faith, with which thou shouldst suck much warm heart-cheering milk from those breasts of consolation, Isa. lxvi. 11. To thee the promises would be encouragements to service; the threatenings, affrightments from sin; the precepts, directions to sanctity. If thy heart were sorrowful, the promises would enliven it; if secure, the threatenings would awaken it; if full of doubts, the precepts would counsel and advise it. Of the promises, more in the next head.

At a sacrament Christ would sweetly feast thy soul, bring thee into his banqueting-house, and cause his banner over thee to be love; when others feed only upon elements, thou shouldst feed on the sacrament, and find his flesh to be meat indeed, and his blood to be drink indeed; when others stood at the door, and are put off with some poor scraps, as much as they came for, thou shouldst be called in, sit at his own table, feasted with the fat things of his own house, drink of the rivers of his own pleasures, continue under his shadow with great delight, and know his fruit sweet unto thy taste; when thou sawest with the eye of faith the board spread, and richly furnished with variety of dainties, all the cordials and sweetmeats of the gospel, among the rest, with that love which is better than wine, thou shouldst hear a voice from the Spirit within thee, 'Eat, O friend; drink abundantly, O beloved;' which, how ravishing it would be to thine ears, and how refreshing to thine heart, no tongue can tell. O reader, hadst thou ever found at a sacrament what it is to sup with Christ, and Christ with thee, thou would scorn the life of an emperor for the life of a new creature.

In prayer, God and thy soul would sweetly converse together. Thy petitions would ascend up to him, and his right hand kindnesses would descend on thee. In this duty thou wouldst call, turning his precepts into prayers, and he would answer by turning his promises into performances. Many, many a blessing shouldst thou obtain kneeling. This vessel would never return (though sometimes it might seem to tarry long) but richly laden. The crop of God's answer would be far greater than the seed of thy prayer out of which it grew. The prodigal desired but the liberty of a servant; but the father bestowed on him the dignity of a son:

'The king asked life, and thou gavest it him, yea, length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou put upon him,' Ps. xxi. 4, 5. As a merchant in a morning will get five hundred or a thousand pounds by a bargain, truly thou shouldst, by a duty in a morning or evening, get thousands, nay, millions, at a clap, increase of grace, a supply of thy spiritual wants, the subduing of thy secret wickedness, peace of conscience, communion with God, joy in the Spirit, which are more worth than the whole earth.

In brief, Christ would be thy shepherd, feed thee in green pastures, lead thee by the still waters, and take care that thou be fat and flourishing. As the root sendeth up its sap through the bark to all its living branches, whereby they continue living and bring forth fruit, so if thou wert but regenerated, and a living branch, thou shouldst derive the sap of grace, through ordinances, from Christ thy root, whereby thou shouldst persevere in spiritual life, and glorify God by bringing forth much fruit.

All the promises of God should be thy portion.

Reader, thou art not able to conceive the unsearchable riches which are laid up in the promises. Well may the apostle call them 'exceeding great and precious promises,' 2 Pet. i. 4. The promises are the great charter, containing all the privileges which were purchased by Christ; like an apothecary's shop, they are full of various salves for every sore, of precious remedies for every malady, of choice cordials to enliven thee with spiritual consolation in the saddest condition. One promise is of unspeakable worth. As every precious stone, so every individual promise hath its virtue and value. It is the saying of one, We had better want meat, drink, air, light, all the elements, than that one sweet sentence of our Saviour,[1] 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' Mat. xi. 28. Mr Burroughs saith that there is more of God in that one verse, John iii. 16, than in heaven and earth beside: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And Mr Baxter, in his Everlasting Rest, I remember, hath an expression to this purpose, that he would not for all the world that that verse, John xvii. 24, had been left out of the Bible, 'Father, I will also, that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.'

One promise hath revived the saints when they have been almost

[1] Mallemus carere sale, cœlo, &c.—*Selvecer in Pœdag. Christian.*

dead with sorrow, and held their heads up, that they have not sunk in deep waters. Beza was refreshed by that, John x. 27–29 ;[1] Mr Bilney, that blessed martyr, by that, 1 Tim. i. 15 ; Father Latimer at the stake by that, 1 Cor. x. 13 ; Mr Robert Bolton, that famous preacher and eminent saint, was comforted under a sad affliction by that, Isa. xxvi. 3. Now if one promise be so precious, how happy shouldst thou be, wert thou but regenerated, to have an interest in all the promises ! That whole book should be thine, wherein every leaf drops myrrh and mercy, love and life. Thou mightst walk in the garden, where those choice flowers, pleasant fruits, and sweet spices grow, and abundantly delight thy soul with their fragrant smell and luscious taste. 'The promise is to you, and to your children, and to them that are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call,' Acts ii. 39. Observe the silver thread upon which all the jewels of the promises hang, 'To as many as the Lord our God shall call.' When thou art called and born of him, all the promises would be thy portion. As all the rivers meet in the ocean, so all the promises meet in regeneration. I will name two or three promises, that thou mayest see how well it would be with thee wert thou once in Christ. All thy sins should be pardoned ; though they were never so great and grievous, yet the blood of Jesus Christ would cleanse thee from them. Didst thou but know what a great price was laid down to procure a pardon, Heb. ix. 22, 24, what dreadful punishments sinners undergo in hell for want of pardon, Jude 7, what sorrows and sighs, broken bones, and watered couches, the saints suffer, when they are but doubtful of their pardon, Ps. xxxviii. 1–4, thou wouldst say, 'O blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered ; blessed is he to whom the Lord imputeth not sin,' Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. Now thou shouldst obtain this blessedness ; God would esteem thee perfectly righteous. Solinus reports of a river in Bœotia which maketh black sheep, if washed therein, white ; truly wert thou never so black a sinner, yet thou shouldst be made white by the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14.

As all thy sins should be remitted, so thy person should be adopted. Thou shouldst of a child of wrath become the child of God, John i. 12. David reckoned it a great honour to be the son-in-law of king Saul. 'Seemeth it,' saith he to Saul's servant, 'a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am vile and lightly esteemed ?' 1 Sam. xviii. 23. Oh what is it then to be the son of God, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords ! 'Behold

[1] Melch. Adamus in Vit.

what manner of love hath the Father loved us with, that we should be called his children,' 1 John iii. 1. The greatest admiration is too little for such infinite condescension; yet this privilege should be thine. The boundless God, who hath millions of glorious angels for his servants, would own, feed, clothe, protect, maintain, and portion thee as his son.

Thou shouldst be sure to persevere in grace. Being once in Christ, thou shouldst be ever in Christ. Though the wind should blow, and the waves beat against thee, yet thou shouldst not fall, being built upon the true rock; the very gates of hell should not prevail against thee. Though thou mightst fall foully, yet thou shouldst never fall finally, because the seed of God would remain within thee, 1 John iii. 9; Phil. i. 6; 1 Thes. v. 23, 24. Thy life would be hid in Christ, as the sap in the root; and therefore thou mightst have thine autumn, yet thou shouldst spring again. Thy stock of grace would not be in thine own, but in Christ's hands, and for this cause thou couldst not possibly prove, as Adam, a bankrupt. Though the flame of a zealous profession might be abated, yet there would be fire on the hearth under the ashes, true grace in thine heart; the love of God to thy soul would be everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3. The kindness of thy Redeemer to thee, everlasting kindness, Isa. liv. 8. The Spirit of grace would abide in thee for ever, John xiv. 16. The covenant into which thou shouldst enter with God would be an everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20; and in that very covenant thy Saviour would undertake for thee, that thou shouldst never depart away from him, but abide in him for ever, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, and xxxii. 40. Christ himself would be ever in thee; and Christ, saith one, may as soon die in heaven at his Father's right hand, as in the heart of a believer.

To sum up all the promises in one, God would be thy God; and how much wealth is in this golden mine would nonplus the tongues of all the men in the world to express, and the understandings of all the angels in heaven to conceive. This is the great new covenant promise, Heb. viii. 8–10, 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' The author of all promises is the matter of this promise. Surely it is the main, the ocean, a large promise indeed, when it contains him whom the heavens, and heaven of heavens, can never contain. The book of promises is as a glorious crown, but this is the most sparkling diamond in it.

Friend, dost thou consider what it is to have God for thy God? All that God is would be thine; the Father thine, to adopt thee

for his own son; the Son thine, to purify and present thee acceptable to the Father; the Spirit thine, to dwell in thee as a witness, seal, and earnest of thine everlasting inheritance. All that is in God should be thine; all his attributes and perfections should be laid out for thy profit; his wisdom would be thine to direct thee, his power thine to protect thee, his grace thine to pardon thee, his mercy thine to pity thee, his goodness thine to comfort thee, and his glory thine to crown thee. Thou canst not imagine what a full good this God is in himself, and would be to thee. He would be to thee health in sickness, strength in weakness, light in darkness, joy in sadness, riches in poverty, honour in ignominy, freedom in slavery, ease in pain, safety in dangers, and life in death. This one God would supply all thy need, 'according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus,' Phil. iv. 19.

God would subdue thy corruptions, enable thee to overcome temptations, to be a gainer by afflictions, to hold out under desertions, to improve providences, to be the better for ordinances, to be filled with holiness, and fitted for happiness. He would do more for thee than thou couldst ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. Well might the psalmist wonder at the riches of his portion, who had a propriety in God: Ps. cxliv. 15, 'Happy is the people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people, whose God is the Lord.' Ainsworth reads these words by way of admiration, 'Oh happy is the people whose God is the Lord!'[1] As if the psalmist, considering what he had said before, that it was a happiness to enjoy children, cattle, and outward comforts, did from those streams ascend to the fountain, and gathered by rational arguing, if they are happy that have their sons growing as plants, their daughters as polished stones, their barns swelling, and their flocks thriving, oh how happy are these whose God is the Lord! If they are so blessed who have the stars, how happy are they that have the sun! For in the presence of this sun all those stars must vanish and disappear. Mollerus takes the words by way of correction, Yea, rather, blessed is the people whose God is the Lord. As if David had recalled himself, and with his pen given a dash to all that he had said: Did I say that they were happy which abounded with relations, possessions, and outward comforts? I recall myself. Alas! they are not happy in comparison of their happiness who have the Lord for their God; yea, rather, happy is the people whose God is the Lord. By this latter he cuts off the neck of his former expression. Some take the words conjunctively, as if David had

[1] Beatus ergo populus cujus Jehova est Deus.— *Tremel.*

proclaimed them happy indeed for whom the Lord as their God doth so liberally provide.[1] The children must needs be happy that have a Father that takes such care of them, and bestoweth so many outward good things on them. Augustine takes the words disjunctively, as if the former part of the verse, 'Happy is the people that is in ease,' were the voice of the world; and the latter part of it, 'Yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord,' were the voice of the saints. And that father explains himself to this purpose: O vain and foolish speakers, O strange children, they have called the people happy that are in such a case. But what sayest thou, David? What sayest thou, O body of Christ? What say ye, O members of Christ? What say ye, O children of God? Because those vain speakers and strange children have called them happy that are in such a case? What say ye?' And then he answereth for them, as the voice of all, 'Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.'[2]

Thus happy, reader, shouldst thou be, if thou wert once regenerated. That God, in comparison of whom the whole creation is as nothing, would be thy God. Oh how eminently, how infinitely, shouldst thou be blessed, in having so rich, so vast, so boundless a good for thy God! Thou shouldst be blessed in thy body, that should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and part of the mystical body of the Son of God, and so nearly and closely united to him, that neither death, grave, nor dust, should ever be able to separate it from him, 1 Cor. vi. 19; 1 Thes. iv. 14, 16.

Thou shouldst be blessed in thy soul, that should be ever fat and flourishing, Ps. xcii. 13, 14, like a watered garden abounding in fruit; the smell of thy soul would be as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.

Thou shouldst be blessed in thy estate; that blessing which can turn a prison into a palace, a cottage into a court, poverty into plenty, would be thy portion. Thou shouldst be sure of necessaries, of enough to bear thy charges till thou comest to thy father's house, Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26, and xxxiv. 11. Having faith, thou shouldst not fear a famine, but wouldst be assured that he who feeds the birds of the

[1] Prædicat populum beatum cui hæc bona a Deo contigerint, sed addit mox correctionem, ne quis in his rebus terrenis subsistat, et summam beatitudinem ponat.—*Mollerus in loc.*

[2] O vaniloqui, O filii alieni! Beatum dixerunt populum cui hæc sunt. Quid tu, David? Quid tu, corpus Christi? Quid vos, membra Christi? Quid vos, non filii alieni, sed Dei? Quoniam vaniloqui filii alieni, beatum dixerunt populum, cui hæc sunt; vos quid dicitis? Beatus populus cujus Dominus Deus ipsius.—*Aug. in Ps.* cxliii. tom. viii.

air, fodders the beast of the fields, filleth the bellies of his enemies with hidden treasures, would never forget his friends, or starve his children. The Lord would be thy shepherd, and therefore thou couldst not want, Ps. xxiii. 1. As they that are well lined within, and have much good blood and spirits, can endure to go in cold weather with less clothes than others; so thou being inwardly strengthened with the grace and love of God, shouldst be able to walk in the world comfortably with a less estate than others. If thou shouldst be thine own carver, thou wouldst cut thy fingers.

If thy means were small, thy stomach should not be great. As the sheep can live upon bare commons, and thrive there, where the fat ox would be starved; so in the midst of thy straits, thy contentedness would give thee a sufficiency, when others, who are strangers to grace, in the midst of their sufficiency are in straits, Job xx. 22. True piety hath true plenty, and is never without a well-contenting sufficiency, for it will give him who hath nothing the possession of all things, 1 Tim. vi. 6; Hab. iii. 16, 17; 2 Cor. vi. 11. Thy dinner of herbs, with the love and favour of God, would be better than a stalled ox with his anger and frowns, Prov. xv. 15, 16.

Thou shouldst be blessed in thy children: 'The just man walketh in his integrity, and his children are blessed after him,' Prov. xx. 7. Jehu's children fared the better for their father's godliness, though it were but counterfeit, 2 Kings x. 30. Surely, then, the generation of the upright shall be blessed, Ps. cxii. 2. When thou didst leave them, God would find them, and requite thy children for thy love to him, much more faithfully than David did Mephibosheth for Jonathan's good-will, Gen. xvii. 8; Acts ii. 39.

Thy whole house would be the happier for thee: 'God blesseth the habitation of the righteous,' Prov. iii. 33. Nothing can possibly be wanting, but it may be made up by thy blessing: 'If thou dost hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, blessed shalt thou be in the city, and in the field; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store; blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out, and blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in,' Deut. xxviii. 1-14.

Thou wouldst be a blessing to thy neighbours; as a conduit, yield clear water for others' comfort. If they were profane, they might be brought to mind piety by thy precepts and pattern. If they were good, they would rejoice at thy conversion to God, and,

like Abraham, make a feast at the weaning of thee, a child of the promise, from the breasts of the creatures.

Thou shouldst be blessed in thy name: 'The memory of the just is blessed,' Prov. x. 7. Thy name would be heir to thy life; as soon as ever thy nature were religious, thy name would be reverend; and when thou diest thou wouldst go out of this world like some sweet perfume, leaving a fragrant savour behind thee.

O reader, how many sheets might I write in relating thy felicity. How honourable shouldst thou be, having blood-royal running in thy veins, and being heir-apparent to a kingdom of glory! How rich, having a key to God's treasury, and being interested in the covenant of grace, which hath more wealth in it than heaven or earth! How comfortable, having the promises for thy cordials, and being garrisoned with that peace of God which passeth all understanding! How beautiful, having the robe of the righteousness of God to adorn thee, which is infinitely more comely than the unspotted innocency either of Adam or angels! The infinite God would be thy God, blessed angels thy guardians, beautiful saints thy companions, durable riches thy portion, the flesh of Christ thy food, his own robes thy raiment, and his own mansion-house thine everlasting home.

Thou couldst not cast an eye, but it would see matter of mirth; nor send forth a thought, but it would return with a report of mercy. Whether thou lookest up to thy Father in heaven, and his glorious attendants there, or lookest down to his creatures on earth, and the signs of his manifold wisdom and mighty power here, or whether thou lookest into conscience or Scriptures, everything, all things, would yield thee cause of comfort, and give thee occasion of inward exultation.

In all conditions, be they never so sad, thy soul would be safe, and thine everlasting estate secure. The vails are uncertain, but the standing wages are certain. What ballast is to a ship, that regeneration would be to thy spirit. If the vessel be sound and well ballasted, though it may be tossed and rocked with winds and waves, yet it shall not be ruined; so, if thine heart were stablished with grace, thou shouldst be steady in the greatest storm; nay, though thou wert naked in deep waters, in the mighty sea, yet Christ, thine head, being ever above water, thou couldst not possibly sink.

When thou shouldst come to die, and to throw thy last cast for eternity, thou mightst walk in the valley of the shadow of death, and fear none ill, for God would be with thee, Ps. xxiii. When pale-

faced death knocks at the door of thine house of clay, by the hand of some mortal sickness, thou needst not be daunted at his grim looks, but mightst boldly open to him, and bid that messenger heartily welcome, as knowing that he comes from a God in covenant, to give thee a passage into fulness of joy and everlasting pleasures.

It is reported of Godfrey, Duke of Bouillon, in his expedition to the Holy Land, that when his army came within view of Jerusalem, beholding the high turrets and fair fronts which were the skeletons of far more glorious bodies, they were so transported with joy that they gave such a shout that the very earth was said to ring again. How might thine heart leap with joy, when thou upon thy death-bed shouldst with the eye of faith behold the stately turrets and pearly gates of the new and eternal Jerusalem!

Thou mightst contentedly leave thine earthly habitation for thy Father's house, and joyfully bid adieu to thy corruptible silver and airy honours for an enduring substance and an eternal weight of glory. How cheerfully mightst thou forsake thy meat and drink, and all thy carnal comforts, to eat bread in the kingdom of heaven, and to bathe thy soul in angelical delights! With what courage mightst thou bid farewell to thy stately dwelling, dearest wife, most lovely children, and all thy kindred and acquaintance, to go to 'mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,' Heb. xii. 22–24.

Thou shouldst comfortably think of thy body's being laid in the grave, to sleep there till the morning of the resurrection; for that bed would be sweet to thee, being perfumed with the precious body of thy Saviour for thee. And with what joy mightst thou think of the day of judgment, when thy body should be awakened out of its sleep, united to thy soul, fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, and both soul and body made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity! Oh the felicity of the regenerate! How blessed are they whom God chooseth, and causeth by regeneration to approach unto him! Friend, friend, can the world do half this for thee? Why, then, dost thou spend thy strength for what is not bread, and thy labour for what will not satisfy?

Will not God do all this and much more for thee? Why then dost thou forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew unto thyself broken cisterns that can hold no waters? Ah, didst thou but

know the gift of God, and who it is that offereth these things to thee, thou wouldst ask of him, and he would give thee living waters, John iv. 10. Reader, what sayest thou to these things? Is there not infinite reason why thou shouldst speedily give a bill of divorce to thy most beloved lusts, and strike a hearty covenant with the Lord Jesus? Art not thou fully convinced of the matchless gain of godliness? Let conscience speak. One would think such powerful arguments could not be denied—that so many and such costly loadstones should draw thee towards heaven, though thine heart were as hard as iron or steel. If thou art for profit, man, here is profit indeed, and to purpose. Thus, whilst thou continuest in this world, thou shouldst be a blessed soul.

CHAPTER XIII.

The felicity of the regenerate in the other world.

Though in what I have already offered, in the name of the blessed God, I have unspeakably outbid devil, world, and flesh, yet to manifest thy folly in making and continuing a league with them, to thine extreme and inconceivable disadvantage, I shall endeavour to set before thee, though briefly, the far greater felicity which thou shouldst obtain in the other world.

As whilst thou continuest in this world thou shouldst be a blessed soul, so when thou enterest into the other world thou shouldst be a glorious saint.

And this, reader, is the best wine, which Christ keeps for his guests till the last, though how good it is none can tell but they that have tasted it. Truly, what Nazianzen said of Basil, I may say of this glorious saint, There wants nothing but his own tongue to commend him. The subject is large and weighty; and sure I am that it would require the words, not only of a saint, but an angel, to do it according to its worth. I shall only give thee a say, briefly, of that which glorified saints enjoy fully.

First, Thou shouldst know what perfection of holiness is. If thou wert but new born, this one thought would fill thy soul with marrow and fatness, and cause thy mouth to praise God with joyful lips. One drachm of holiness infinitely surpasseth, in the esteem of a saint, all the kingdoms and empires of this world. How much then is perfect holiness worth! In heaven thou shouldst have it.

'There thou shouldst be before the throne without fault, and serve him day and night in his temple,' Rev. xiv. 5.

What price doth a saint set upon, and what pains doth he take for, a little holiness! If thou wouldst know why he hideth the word in his heart, it is that he might not sin against God; the purging out of sinful humours is the end for which he takes that physic. Why he readeth and heareth so diligently, it is that he might be sanctified through God's truth, cleansing is the reason why he useth that water. Why he prayeth so frequently and so fervently, it is that he might have a clean heart created, and a right spirit renewed within him. Grace is the chief alms for which he knocks and begs so hard, at the beautiful gate of God's temple; why he goeth to the sacrament, it is that he might grow in sanctity; he goeth to the death of his Saviour, for the death of his sins; and his great design in that spiritual feast is to feed, that he might get some more spiritual strength. Nay, how contented can he be under very sad crosses, if they may but make him more like to Christ! he can patiently bear the pain of lancing and cutting, so it may but let out corruption. He can take bitter pills for the removing of inward diseases, and the furthering of his soul's health, and more willingly spend all he hath for the cure of his issue of sin, than ever the woman did for the cure of her issue of blood. Now, reader, thou shouldst have the vessel of thy soul filled with this water of life, one drop of which is so precious, as thou hast heard, to the regenerate. Thou shouldst have a perfection of degrees, as well as of parts, and enjoy so much of these true riches, that thou shouldst not desire one grain more. Thou shouldst be a book wherein the image of God should be written in a fair large print, and there should be no errata in thee. Sin now is like the ivy in the wall, cut it never so much, yet it will sprout out again; but as grace mortifieth it here, glory shall nullify it in heaven. Wert thou in Christ, it would be no small comfort to think the time is coming when thou shalt never offend God more, never deal unkindly with Christ more.

Thou shouldst by blessed experience know the truth of those Scriptures: 'Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,' 1 John iii. 9. 'Christ loved his Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish,' Eph. v. 25–27.

The body of death should die with the death of thy body. Thou shouldst not be taken away in thy sins, but from thy sins. It would be impossible for thee to sin there, because of thine happy sight of God there. Sin is an aversion from God, and conversion to the creature. Now thou shouldst enjoy such soul-ravishing sweetness in the blessed God, and that so fully, that thou couldst not leave so excellent a good for any creature; thy graces, here in their minority and nonage, would be then in their maturity.

If that holiness which is but in part on earth, would be so beautiful in thine eyes, that it would ravish thine heart more than all the glory of this world, what would perfect holiness in heaven be?

If the picture or image of God be so comely in its rough draft here below, ah, how lovely a piece will it be in all its perfections, when God's *novissima manus*, his last hand, shall come upon it above! 1 John iii. 2.

Secondly, Thou shouldst know what complete happiness is. Thine holiness and happiness, like twins, would grow up and come to their full age together; thy perfect purity there would cause perfect peace. Thy day of light and gladness in heaven could never be overcast with the smallest cloud, because sins, that are the vapours out of which they breed, could not ascend so high. Thy freedom from evil would be full, thy fruition of good would be full, and therefore thy felicity must needs be full. Thy body there would be free from the diseases and deformity to which it is liable, and with which it is affected here. The errors of the first would be corrected in its second edition. A body of vileness shall be a body of glory.

All those miseries which fright and molest thee now would then forsake thee. No evil durst arrest thee, when thou shalt walk in the presence of Zion's King. In this thou shouldst be like irrational creatures, that thy misery should end with thy life; and in this resemble the blessed angels, that thou shouldst always behold the face of thy Father.

In his presence is fulness of joy. When the sun beholdeth the moon with his full aspect, then the moon is at the full. In heaven the Sun of righteousness would ever look upon thee with his favourable face, in so full a degree, that thou shouldst be at the full of thy light and happiness. God is an universal good; the soul of man hath a kind of infinite appetite. It desireth this pleasure and that treasure, and when it hath them, it is like a dropsical body, as thirsty as ever; for those creatures, having but a particular limited goodness, can never satisfy; but God will supply all the

soul's wants, because he is an infinite and universal good, and answereth all things.

Thou shouldst ever be at the well-head; and therefore needest not fear the least want. Thine appetite there would be ever fresh after God, and thy satisfaction ever full in God. God would be to thee anything, everything, all things which thy heart could possibly desire. God is so sweet and satisfying a good to his people on earth, that they have found the loss of other things abundantly made up in his favour and love, Hab. iii. 16, 17; 1 Sam. xxx. 6, though he communicated himself but in small drops, by slow degrees unto them. Oh, then, what would God be to thee in heaven, when he would give himself abundantly and continually unto thy soul! If all the delightful objects and pleasures which the whole creation here below affordeth were united into one and bestowed upon thee, and thou wert to live a thousand years in the enjoyment of it, this were not worth one day in God's courts in this world; much less an hour, or one moment's enjoying him in the other world. 'In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore,' Ps. xvi. 11. Though all words are too weak to utter the saint's happiness there, yet David speaks much in this verse. For quality there is *joy*, there is *pleasure*. What canst thou wish which is not contained in those two words? Hope of future joy made the man of sorrows contented under his shameful and bloody cross; how comfortable wilt thou be when thou shalt have it in hand.

For quantity, *fulness of joy*, or a torrent, of which thou shouldst drink full draughts without interruption or intermission. Thy joy would be pure without mixture, and perfect without measure. The Master's joy, or the joy of thy Lord: in his presence; the fruition of God is the fairest flower in the garland of honour, and that alone which gives complete satisfaction to the soul: he is the heaven of heaven, and other things are but accessory to this principal; yet other things there would afford comfort, through the God of consolation.

The sights there would please thine eyes; for thou shouldst behold not only perfect saints, but the peerless Saviour; thine eyes should see the King in his glory: there is a great difference between seeing a king in his ordinary attire, and on his throne with his robes and all his signs of majesty. The sight of the saints would much delight thee, to see those heirs in the possession of their inheritances. When Cyneas, the ambassador of Pyrrhus, had beheld the state and magnificence of the Roman senators and

people, he was so exceedingly taken with it, that at his return from that city of Rome, being asked how he liked it, and what he thought of that state, he answered, that he saw as many emperors as senators, and that it was a commonwealth of kings. Such would heaven be to thine eyes,—a commonwealth of emperors and kings, wherein every saint would have a robe of honour, a sceptre of power, a throne of majesty, and crown of glory. Surely, such sights would fill thee with wonder and joy, to behold all the children in their Father's house so richly clad, so daintily feasted, and so highly advanced as they shall be there. But oh the joy which will possess thee at the sight of the Lord Jesus, who, as the Sun, will shine gloriously indeed in the midst of those stars; and as a judge, be known by his robes from all the justices on the bench. If it were so good to behold him here in his estate of humiliation, and in his mourning weeds, what will it be to behold him in his estate of exaltation, and in his bright, sparkling, and glorious robes? Truly, that light will be sweet, and it will be pleasant to behold that Sun.

As the sights there would please thine eyes, so the sounds there will please thine ears. I have read of a divine, that when he heard rare music on earth, he was much taken with it, presently cried out, Oh, the ravishing music which is in heaven! How will thy spirit be taken when thou shalt hear the new song, the song of the Lamb, sung by the pleasant voices, and played upon the harps of the thousand thousands that are before the throne of God, who rest not day nor night, but say and sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created,' Rev. iv. 8, 11.

O how much might I expatiate here, and show thee that whatever is requisite to happiness would be enjoyed by thee there! If honour could make thee happy, thou shouldst there have an eternal weight of glory, such a weight, that if thou wert not upheld by the power of God, would press thee down. If pleasures can make thee happy, thou shouldst drink of the rivers of pleasures which flow from the blessed God for ever: such pleasures as thine eyes never saw, thine ears never heard, and thine heart can never conceive. If a gallant glorious feast could make thee happy, thou shouldst be happy; thou shouldst dwell in a city whose builder and maker is God, its gates are of pearl, and its pavement of pure gold, Rev. xxi. 19, 20. The house which thou shouldst live in, is

the Father's house, that house which the mighty possessor of heaven and earth hath erected with his own hands, to be the place wherein he will shew all his riches, magnificence, grace, goodness, and glory. If rest could make thee happy, thou shouldst rest from all thy labours, enjoy an eternal sabbath: there the spiritual oppressors cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest. If good company could make thee happy, thou shouldst have the society of all the saints, sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the prophets, apostles, and all the children of God in the kingdom of heaven; thou shouldst enjoy the many millions of holy angels, the dearest Jesus, and the ever blessed God. If food can make thee happy, thou shouldst eat of the hidden manna, of the bread which came down from heaven, of the tree of life, which groweth in Paradise, and drink of the water of life, which is clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. If life can make thee happy, thou shouldst have that eternal life which is from God, in God, and with God. In a word, whatever were needful for thee, or could be joyful to thee, or desired by thee, in order to thy happiness, thou shouldst have it.

Thirdly, thou shouldst know the virtue and preciousness of the blood of Christ: the apostle doth not without cause, when he compares the blood of Christ with silver and gold, infinitely prefer it before them, and call it precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. Indeed, it is that which is the diamond to the ring, addeth worth and value to whatever it is joined to. The two testaments are precious, because they are both sprinkled with the blood, and confirmed by the death of the testator, Heb. ix. 16–19. The Lord's Supper is precious, because it sheweth forth the Lord's blood and death, 1 Cor. xi. 26. Pardon of sin, peace of conscience, the affection of the Father, the sanctification of the Spirit, are all precious, because they are the fruits and effects of this precious blood, 1 John i. 7; Rom. v. 1; Heb. ix. 14; Eph. ii. 13. All our comforts run in this channel; the blood of Christ is the stream which bears them up, and brings them to us; yea, heaven itself, and the crown of glory, have weight and worth from this sparkling stone. Heaven is a purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. It is the blood of Jesus which giveth boldness to enter into that holy place, Heb. x. 19. The precious price paid for it, will speak it, and make it, a glorious place.

If thou wert once regenerated, Christ would be so precious to thee at this day, that all things would be dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus thy Lord: 'to them that believe, Christ is precious,' 1 Pet. ii. 7. Oh the

price which true Christians set upon Christ! The wise merchant sold all for this pearl. I have read that the Duke of Burgundy had a jewel which was afterwards sold for twenty thousand ducats. But Christ to a saint is better than silver, and more desirable than choice gold,—more precious than rubies, yea, than millions of worlds.

When the Athenian ladies were boasting to Phocion's wife of their jewels, she told them, My jewels are my husband Phocion. When Alexander was asked where his treasure was, he shewed them his friends. Such a treasure is Jesus Christ in the esteem of his spouse, his friends; Christ is all in all.

The pious soul is of the same mind with John of Alexandria, surnamed the Almoner; when at the year's end he had given all he had left to the poor, and made even with his revenues, he looks up to heaven, and thanked God that he had nothing left but his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to whom he longed to fly with unlimed and untangled wings. The face of none is so comely to the saint's eye, the voice of none is so lovely to his ears, the taste of nothing so pleasant in his mouth, as Jesus Christ.

But the Christian hath a choice room in his soul for the blood of his Saviour: he prizeth the shameful cross of Christ above the most glorious crown of the greatest earthly potentate, Gal. vi. 14. Thus, friend, it would be with thee here, if thou wert converted, thou wouldst determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Oh the honey which thou wouldst suck out of the carcase, the death of this Lion of the tribe of Judah!

When thou shouldst consider that this blood of Jesus Christ is that alone which hath satisfied God's justice, Rom. iii. 25, and v. 9; pacified his anger, Col. i. 20; Heb. ix. 14; Rev. i. 5, 6; justified thy person, sanctified thy nature, removed the curse of the law from thee, and thee from the eternal wrath of God, and unquenchable torments of hell, would it not be precious blood in thine esteem? Think of it, what a price thou wouldst set upon it. But when thou shouldst for ever behold the blessed body of Christ shining with incomprehensible beauty, far above the brightest cherub; and consider that every vein in that body bled to bring thee to glory; when thou shouldst see thousands and millions in matchless and endless burnings, from which thou wert delivered, and behold thy body made far more glorious than the sun in his high noon attire, and thy soul filled brimful with unspeakable joy; nay, every part of thy body and soul enlarged to the utmost, and fully satisfied with inconceivable delight, and thou shouldst be confident and as-

sured to enjoy this for ever, and know clearly all this to be the travail of Christ's soul, and the fruit of his blood: friend, friend, what thoughts wilt thou have of the blood of Christ? Surely, it will be precious blood indeed; thou wouldst have other manner of thoughts of him that came by water and blood than thou ever hadst here below.

The work of our redemption will be the matter of the saints' communion, and the great subject of their eternal admiration. Their delivery from sin, Satan, wrath, and hell, into a state of liberty, love, grace, and salvation, by the blood of Jesus, will fill their eyes and hearts with wonder, love, and joy for ever.

All the voices there shall sing this song, and all the viols there shall be set to this tune: 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and glory, and blessing,' Rev. v. 9–12.

If the queen of Sheba, when she beheld the wisdom and magnificence of Solomon, was so transported that there remained no more spirit in her, how will thine heart be transported to see the love and glory of the true Solomon, who wept, and bled, and lived, and died to bring thee to heaven!

Fourthly, Thou shouldst know what God is; and truly this would be no small part of thy felicity. Knowledge is the excellency of a man, and differenceth him from a brute. Divine knowledge is the excellency of a Christian, and differenceth him from a heathen. The knowledge of human things hath been so highly esteemed by some of the heathen that they have professed they would give their whole estates to enjoy their books without interruption. What then is the knowledge of divine things worth? Aristotle saith that a little knowledge of heavenly things, though but conjectural, is better than much certain knowledge of earthly things: what then is the knowledge of the God of heaven worth? The excellency of the object doth much dignify the act.

In this world thou canst see but a little of him, thy sight is so weak; but there thou shouldst see him as he is, 1 John iii. 3. Now the Christian rather seeth and knoweth God as he is not than as he is: we describe him (for indeed he is infinitely above all definitions)

by way of negation, to be a spirit, infinite, unchangeable, and the like, which particulars tell us what God is not. He is a spirit, that is, a being without a body; for God is not a spirit as the souls of men and as angels are; I mean, not of such a substance. The Spirit of God in that expression, 'God is a spirit,' John iv., condescendeth to our capacities, because we are not able to conceive of the nature of the blessed God as he is in himself: therefore the Holy Ghost doth speak of God by the most excellent beings which our understandings reach, as spirits are; for God is questionless such a spiritual being as is far above the most enlarged understanding. Besides, we are so clogged and pinioned with flesh that we know but little, yea, very little, of our own spirits, much less what a spirit God is. But there thou shouldst, if converted, know him fully, thy understanding should be enlarged and satisfied.

Those scales which now hang about thine intellectual eye should then fall off, and thou that didst behold him upon earth in the glass of his gospel, shouldst then see him face to face; as the sun doth by his beams and brightness so enlighten the eye and air that we see thereby not only other creatures, but its own most glorious body; so God would, by the beams and beauty of his majesty, so irradiate thy mind, that thou shouldst see both the comeliness of his creatures and the brightness of his own being.

Thou shouldst know the great mystery of the Trinity, the love of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the sweet fellowship of the Holy Ghost. That riddle which now puzzleth thee should there be unfolded; thou shouldst know how the Father begat the Son, how the Spirit proceeded from Father and Son, and the difference between the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit.

Thou shouldst know God in the unity of his nature. Now the saints know him most by his attributes, which indeed differ not all from his being; they are but different manifestations of one undivided essence, and distinguished by us for our better understanding of the divine nature; but they are all the same in him and in themselves, and then we shall know so.

Thou shouldst know the hypostatical union, John xiv. 20; how the Son of God became the Son of man; that wonder of wonders, Emmanuel, God with us, God and man in one person, would be clearly seen; all those knots would be untied; thou shouldst then plough with God's heifers, and understand all his riddles; thou shouldst know all things in God that were to be known, in a full manner, in a large measure, to thine infinite comfort and content. Thou shouldst know all this, and far more, for thy good.

If a little knowledge of God here be so pleasant to the soul, though it be but a glimpse of him in the dawning of the morning, what satisfaction will the complete knowledge of him yield, to see that sun at noonday! Ps. xix. 10. If it be life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ imperfectly, what will it be to know them perfectly, and so as to enjoy them fully? Surely such instruction will be better than silver, and such knowledge than choice gold; this wisdom is better than rubies, and all that thou canst desire is not to be compared to it.

How much have many wasted their wealth, dried their brains, lacerated their bodies, for a little knowledge of nature, which, when they had gone to their utmost, could not satisfy them? They might as soon have broke their necks as their fasts by such knowledge. But of what inestimable value is the knowledge of the God of nature, is the knowledge of him in Christ here? and oh, of what incomparable worth will it be to know of him as we are known of him, to see him face to face? This will be without question the beatifical vision.

Fifthly, Thou shouldst know the extent and truth of all the promises in the word, which concern thy welfare in the other world. How various and how precious are the promises which relate to heaven! God promiseth his children, such as are born of him, large portions when they shall come to age, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and thou shouldst then find that God will make good his word to a tittle. He promiseth that 'they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them'; that they shall be 'before the throne, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; that they shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,' Rev. vii. 3–17. He promiseth that 'they shall be with Christ where he is, and behold his glory,' John xvii. 24. That they shall be clothed in white raiment, and not blotted out of the book of life, but confessed before the Father and the holy angels, Rev. ii. 7, 11, and iii. 5. Christ promiseth, 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem; and I will write upon him my new name,' Rev. iii. 12. That they which 'overcome shall sit down with him on his throne,

even as he hath overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne,' Rev. iii. 21; look Ps. xvi. 11, and xvii. 15; Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. v. 1; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Mat. xviii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 4; Phil. iii. 21; 1 Thes. iv. 2, 18; 1 John iii. 2; Eph. v. 25, 26.

All these promises, and many more, shall be fully accomplished. There shall not one good thing of all that the Lord hath spoken be unfulfilled. The expectation of the promises hath filled several of God's children with ecstacies and ravishments of spirit; what joy then will the possession of them bring? The very thought of a promise hath made them, like Leviathan, to laugh at the shaking of spears, at the threatening of their adversaries, nay, to kiss stakes, and smile at fire and faggots. Oh then what will the performance be? The promises are large, but our straitened minds cannot understand their breadth; but then happy experience shall teach us their full latitude; they are now like bones which have the sweetest meat upon them, and the sweetest marrow in them; but we are not able here to pick them clean, nor to suck out half the marrow; but then we shall taste and enjoy everything in them. Now when we read of drinking of the rivers of God's pleasures, of dwelling in his house, of a kingdom, and thrones, and sceptres, and palms, and crowns of glory, and reigning with Christ for ever and ever, our hearts are ready to faint, as Jacob at the news of his son's honour in Egypt, and as the queen of Sheba at the news of Solomon's wisdom, believed it not, so we. What, God look upon such sinks of sin, such clods of clay as we are, and make our vile bodies like unto the glorious body of his Son, and our souls like unto his blessed majesty, in holiness, beauty, and delight! Oh what are we, and what our father's houses, that God should do anything for us? As Perillus, when Alexander promised his daughter fifty talents for her portion, crieth, it was too much, ten were sufficient; and when David sent to take Abigail to wife, she wondered at it, she counted it an honour to wash the feet of his servants, it was too much to be his wife; so we cannot but count it a favour to wait upon his servants, to be his doorkeepers, and stand without; it is too much, we think, to be married to Christ, the eternal Son of God, and to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. We can hardly be persuaded that God will thus dignify such worthless worms; but then seeing and enjoying will be believing. Then we shall say, it was a true report which I heard in the lower world what God would do for poor creatures in heaven; howbeit I believed not till I came, and mine eyes have seen it, and behold the half was not told me; my glory and joy exceedeth the fame which I heard.

Sixthly, Thou shouldst enjoy all the forementioned good things, and more than I can speak or thou think, without intermission, interruption, and for ever. The good things of this life are intermitted, partly by contrary and evil things, as our health lost by sickness, our wealth by want; partly by necessary diversions: the body must have sleep, and then we lose the comfort of the creatures: but there thy day of comfort should never be overcast, for all tears will be wiped from thine eyes, and thy fruition of God should be without intermission; thou shouldst ever stand in his presence and behold his face; thou shouldst ever be with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 16. Hadst thou here a confluence of all comforts, yet, because thy life is short, thy joy could not be long; but there thy life will be an everlasting life, and thy joy therefore everlasting joy. 'I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you,' saith Christ, John xvi.

Eternity will perfect thy felicity indeed. It is a boundless duration, without intermission and end. Suppose that all the vast space between heaven and earth were filled with sand, and once every ten thousand years a bird came and carried away a crumb in her bill, what a long while it would be before this vast heap would be carried quite away. But suppose after the bird had done that, it was to come every ten thousand years, and take one drop of water out of the sea, what a while would it be before it could empty the ocean! But after all this thou shouldst have as long to continue in thy joy and delights, as at thy first entering into heaven.

If thou shouldst have but one glimpse of God as he was passing by thee, as Moses had, it were a happiness beyond all that this world can give thee; but thou shalt there not have a transient view, but a permanent vision of God. Thy God would not pass by, but stand still, that thou shouldst never lose the sight of him. When the object would be so lovely, and the act so lasting, would not thy spirit be cheerful and lively? As the damned shall be without all hope ever to be released of their pains, so thou shouldst be without all fear ever to be deprived of thy pleasures. Oh who would not serve such a Master, that giveth, after poor imperfect works done for him, such infinite eternal rewards? It is bottomless love indeed which giveth such a boundless life.

Thus, reader, I have given thee a taste of that of which thou, if regenerated, should have a full draught. Whilst thou continuest in this world, thou shouldst be a blessed soul—blessed in thy body, in thy soul, in thy calling, estate, relations, children, and name. All the providences of God should be profitable to thee; in all thy

performances thou shouldst be acceptable to God, and all the ordinances of God should further thy good; the precious promises—one of which excels the whole world—should all be thy portion. When thou enterest into the other world, thou shouldst be a glorious saint; thou shouldst be perfectly holy and infinitely happy in the knowledge of the blessed God, in finding the incomparable fruits of Christ's blood, and in experiencing the extent and certainty of God's promises; and thou shouldst enjoy all this, not for a year, or an age, or for a millon of ages, but for ever, ever, ever. Now what sayest thou to this subject of consideration? Hast thou not unspeakable cause, by an hearty marriage, to close with the Son of God, and accept him for thy Lord and husband, when he offereth such matchless privileges here, and such a heavenly jointure hereafter? Good Lord, is it possible for man to be such an enemy to his soul as to neglect such great salvation? What a hard stone is the heart of man, that neither misery nor mercy can move it. Ah friend, thou art bewitched indeed, if neither the wonderful woe of the unregenerate, nor the unheard-of weal of the regenerate, can prevail with thee.

But before thou readest farther, make a pause, and consider what is included in these two subjects of consideration. The heathen tell us that such as cannot be persuaded by profit or disprofit are unpersuadable. Think of it: here is the greatest advantage imaginable, if thou wilt turn to Christ; here is the greatest damage conceivable, if thou continuest in thine ungodly course. Surely thou art resolved upon thine eternal ruin, or such reasons as these are will reform thee.

Ponder this seriously. If thou refusest the Lord Jesus as thy Saviour and Sovereign, thou art a cursed, damned sinner; if thou acceptest him, thou art a blessed, saved creature. In the one scale there is hell, in the other scale there is heaven; upon the turning of either is the turning of thy precious soul, its making or marring for ever. If thou wilt not embrace Christ upon his own conditions, thy soul is lost. Oh the loss of a soul! Thy God, thy heaven is lost. Oh the loss of a God! No eye ever saw greater losses; all other losses are nothing to these. If thou dost, thy soul is saved. How sweet is that word, *saved!* Thy God, thy heaven is gained. O the gain of a God! How savoury is that sentence! Read it again. If thou takest Christ, thy God is gained. Dost thou know what is included in the gain of a God? No, nor all the men on earth, nor all the saints and angels in heaven. There never was such a gain before it, nor ever shall be after it.

Ah, who would not wade through thick and thin for such a gain? What sayest thou? Shall not things of such concernment as these are stir thee?

It is reported of Adrianus,[1] an officer under Maximianus the tyrant, that, beholding the constancy of the martyrs, he was earnest to know what it was which carried them through with so much courage. One of them—there being two and twenty at that time under the tormentor's hands—answered, 'Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9; upon the hearing of which words Adrian was converted, and sealed the truth with his blood. Thou hast heard much more concerning the happiness of the saints in the other world than one verse of Scripture. How art thou taken with it? Doth the joy there nothing affect thine heart, nor enlarge it in sallies out after it. O that joy, that glory, that house, that eternal heaven were mine! Doth it nothing resolve thee against sin, and for Christ? Answer God in thy conscience.

Some write that forty-one of Alexander's friends drunk themselves dead for a crown of gold of one hundred and eighty pounds weight, which the king provided for them which drank most. God offereth thee a crown of glory, not corruptible, as silver and gold are, but eternal. Art thou not ashamed that those swaggerers should cursedly lose their lives and souls for a fading crown, when thou wilt not leave thy lusts, thy sins, for an ever-flourishing crown of glory?

O man, bethink thyself whilst thou hast time, and do not, as profane Esau, prefer thy mess of pottage before these spiritual privileges and the eternal purchase. Cleopatra, the Egyptian princess, told Marcus Antonius, when she saw him spending his time vainly and meanly, much below the quality of a prince, It is not for you to fish for gudgeons or trouts, but for towns, and cities, and castles, and kingdoms. So say I to thee, It is not for thee to lie spending thy time and strength, and beating thine head and heart, for an hoard of dust or an heap of earth, which shall shortly take its leave of thee, but for the spiritual riches, for durable riches and righteousness. It is not for thee to busy thyself about toys and trifles, but about the image of God, the blood of Christ, the covenant of grace, the kingdom of heaven, the eternal weight of glory. Oh these are worthy of all thoughts, and words, and actions, of all thy time, and strength, and health—of all thy name and estate, and interest whatsoever.

[1] Laurent. Sur. in vit.

If thou art a rational creature, let reason prevail with thee, and shew thyself a man of understanding. It was the custom formerly in England to try one that was begged for a fool, in this manner:[1] An apple or a counter, with a piece of gold, was set before him. If he take the apple or the counter, he is cast for a fool in the judgment of the court, as one that knoweth not the true value of things, or how to make choice of what was best for him. Truly thus it is with thee. God setteth before thee the counters and carnal comforts of this world, the true gold and unutterable happiness of the other world; nay, he layeth before thee the eternal pains of hell, and the eternal pleasures of heaven, to try which thou wilt take. Now, if thou wilt take a poor portion below, and leave the purchased possession above; if thou wilt, to abide in thy sensual lusts, choose the torments of hell, and refuse, by not submitting to the rule of Christ, the joys of heaven, art thou not a fool in grain? Surely the devil will beg thee for a fool for ever; therefore shew thyself wise, by choosing that which is of greatest worth. 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against thee, that I have set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live,' Deut. xxx. 19.

CHAPTER XIV.

The third subject of consideration, the excellency of regeneration.

Thirdly, Consider the excellency of that which the Lord requireth of thee for the avoiding of that easeless, endless misery of the damned, and the attaining the unspeakable and unchangeable felicity of the saved.

Reader, I pray thee speak to God in thine heart, and tell him what is the reason thou art so willing to go to hell, and so unwilling to go to heaven. Sure I am, as thou art a living creature, much more as a rational man, thou hast a natural inclination and propensity toward thine own good and felicity, and therefore thou canst not love hell directly, as it is torturing and racking of thy soul and body, though thou dost love it eventually, as it is the end of thy fleshly, ungodly life. Well, I will undertake for once to dive into thine heart, and tell the reason of thy backwardness towards heaven, and thy forwardness for hell. The reason is this, thou lookest on the power of godliness as distasteful to thy flesh, or dis-

[1] Swinham, Court of Wards and Liv.

graceful to thy name; the yoke of Christ is too strict. It is not the end that displeaseth thee—thou couldst contentedly be happy —but it is the narrowness of the way, and the straitness of the gate, with which thou art dissatisfied; it will not afford thee room enough for thy beloved lusts. Is it not so? Let conscience speak. Well, I hope by the help of God to make thee of another mind, when thou hast thoroughly read this head which I am now writing of.

It is the saying of Plato, that if moral philosophy could be seen with moral eyes, it would draw all men's hearts after it. Sure, sure I am, that if regeneration, or the divine nature, were seen with divine eyes, it would draw men's hearts, and heads, and hands, and all, after it. All that ever struck at it did it in the dark. 'They spake evil of things which they knew not.'

Reader, what is that which God requireth of thee? Is it not to leave thy slavery to Satan, thy bondage to sin, and to accept and enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God? Is it not that thou shouldst be divorced from sin, that misshapen monster, and spawn of the devil, whose person is deformed, whose company is defiling, and whose portion is damnation; and that thou shouldst be married to Jesus Christ, the fairest of ten thousand, the heir of all things, who would adorn thee with the jewels of his graces, beautify thee with the embroidery of his Spirit, wash thee with his own blood, array thee with his own righteousness, and present thee to his Father without spot, to be blessed in his full immediate enjoyment for ever? Is it not that thou shouldst cease thy drudgery to hell's jailor, live above the perishing profits, brutish pleasures, empty honours of the world and flesh, and that thou shouldst walk after the Spirit, walk with God, warm thine heart at the flame of his love, bathe thy soul in angelical delights, have thy conversation in heaven here, and thy habitation there hereafter? Is not this, man, the sum and substance of what the Lord requireth of thee? and art thou not shrewdly hurt? would not these things exceedingly injure thee? Is not God a hard master to desire such things of thee? Ah, didst thou but know the worth of them, hadst thou ever beheld their excellency, or tasted the comfort which is in them, thou wouldst scorn this lower world, with all its pomp, and pride, and pleasures, for them, and befool thyself to purpose for ever refusing or neglecting them.

I shall endeavour, in some few particulars, to shew thee the worth and excellency of that to which thou art so unwilling, and possibly thou mayst thereby be convinced of thy madness and folly

in sticking at that which would be thine honour and felicity. Pliny saith, that an exact face can never be drawn but with much disadvantage. Without doubt, regeneration, or the new creation, can neither be admired nor declared by any, no, nor by all the saints on earth, according to its worth. It is the beauty, glory, and wonder of saints and angels in heaven.

First, Regeneration is the image of God, who is an infinite and most perfect good. Here, friend, at first flight I soar high. One would think, if I should speak no more in commendation of it, here is enough to ravish thine heart with admiring it for ever; it is the picture of God's own perfections. 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 24. As it is the same light that shineth forth in the morning which shineth forth in the body of the sun in its meridian, so it is the same holiness that shineth in its degrees in the Christian, which shineth in perfection in God, Heb. i. 3; Rom. viii. Regeneration would make thee pure, as God is pure; God's will is the rule, and his nature the pattern of the saints' holiness. The coin hath the image and impression of the king; Christ is the express image of his Father's person, and the saints are conformable to the image of his Son.[1] The church is Christ unfolded, Christ is not a monster; the head and members are homogeneal, like to each other.

By reason man excelleth beasts, by holiness he excelleth himself, inferior only to the angels in degree, and made like unto the Lord, as far as a creature may be to his Creator.

Now, how excellent is the image of God! The picture of a king is esteemed, and valued at a high rate; but what is the picture of a God? Some say that the naked body of man was so glorious in his estate of innocency that all the beasts of the field admired it, and thereupon did homage to him. O how beautiful and glorious is his soul become by regeneration, the image of God, that both saints, angels, and Jesus Christ, are taken with it, and wonder at it! He that would not hear when the disciples were speaking and wondering at the building of the material temple, but contemned it, did both hear, see, and admire, at one piece of this spiritual temple; when Jesus heard the centurion's words, 'he marvelled, and said to them that followed him, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,' Matt. viii. 10, 15, 28. Nay, Christ is so taken with it that his heart is ravished and lost with it; he is behearted with it, Cant. iv. 9, 10.

It is observable that the blessed God, after every day's work in

[1] Mr Ball, Of Faith, p. 285.

the creation of the world, takes a view of what he had made, he saw it was good, Gen. i.; but when he had made man the sixth day after his own image, and then took a review of his works, and saw everything that he had made, behold it was very good, or extreme good; so good that it caused delight and complacency in God, and called for wonder and contemplation from man. 'Behold it was very good.' No doubt but the making of man so noble and holy did, above all the visible creatures, so affect the heart of God, that he liked the house much the better because of so rare an inhabitant which he had made to dwell in it. Therefore when he had made man, he made no more, man being so fair a piece, such curious workmanship, that the infinite God resolved to rest and delight in him. So when he createth a soul in Christ Jesus unto good works, Eph. ii. 20, he rejoiceth over his new workmanship with exceeding joy, and resteth in his love, Zeph. iii. 17. But when he shall finish his new creation—for he will print man's holiness in the second edition in a larger letter and fairer character than it was at first—and bring it forth in the other world, it will infinitely surpass the stately fabric of heaven and earth. And oh how, how will it take, not only perfect spirits, but even the God of the spirits of all flesh! Friend, can that be less than eminently excellent which doth thus ravish the heart of God himself with admiration at it, and affection to it? Would this tend to thy dishonour or disadvantage, to be made like unto him who is the foundation and ocean of all excellencies and perfections?

Secondly, Regeneration is the destruction of sin, the greatest evil, therefore it must needs be excellent. Contraries put together will illustrate one another;[1] the baseness and loathsomeness of sin will be a good foil to set off the beauty and loveliness of grace. For which cause I shall speak the more to the filthiness of sin; for as the better any good is, the more excellent it is to be full of it; so the worse any evil is, the more excellent it is to be free from it. Besides, dying to sin being one essential part of regeneration, I shall not at all digress.

Now, sin is the greatest evil in the world; there was none like it before it, nor ever shall be after it. This brat of the devil is so vile and abominable that it is very hard to find out a name suitable to its ugly nature. Those terms by which it is called, of leprosy, spot, plague, vomit, mire, scum, ulcers, issues, dead carcase, exhalation from a grave, the vessel into which nature emptieth itself, filthiness, superfluity of naughtiness, the pollution of a new-born

[1] Contraria juxta se posita magis lucescunt.

infant, and many more; these all come far short of shewing the poisonous evil which is in sin. Therefore the apostle, when he christens this child of disobedience, calls it by its sirname, 'that sin by the commandment might appear exceeding sinful,' Rom. vii. 13. The apostle there doth discharge the law, and charge all upon his own lust, which by the commandment takes occasion, as water at a bridge that stops and hinders it, to rage the more; or possibly, as a foul face by a glass, so sin by the commandment appeared to be exceeding sinful. Mark, the apostle doth not say that sin by the glass of the law appeared to be exceeding foul and filthy, or exceeding deformed and ugly, or exceeding hellish or devilish, but exceeding sinful; this includes all them, and much more. Had he studied a thousand years for a name, he could not have called it by a worse name than its own, sinful sin.

Luther saith that could a man but see perfectly the evil of his sins on earth, it would be a hell to him, such a frightful ugly monster is sin.

Look on sin which way thou wilt, and it is exceeding sinful, the evil of evils.

Take it in its nature, it is a deviation from God's law, a wandering from his word, a casting his law behind the back; the law is straight, sin is crookedness, Ps. cxxv. 5. The law is holy, sin is defilement, Rom. vii. 12; 2 Cor. vii. 1. The law is just, sin is unrighteousness, 1 John i. 7. The law is liberty, sin is bondage, James ii. 8, 12; 2 Tim. ii. 26. Sin is a defacing of God's image; it blots and blurs that fair and beautiful writing, not only meritoriously, as it provokes God to withdraw his grace, but physically, as one contrary expels another. Hereby it dishonours God's name, and reproacheth his majesty, Num. xv. 30; Rom. ii. 23, 24; 2 Sam. xii. 12; Lev. xii. 26; Zech. xi. 8; Rom. viii. 7; Rom. i. 30; 1 Sam. xv. 23; Isa. i. 2; Rom. vi. 16; Ps. xiv. 1; for what greater disgrace can be done to a prince than to tread his orders under foot, and tear, and scratch, and deface his picture?

Nay, it is a defying and fighting against God, a walking contrary to him, a daring of him; it is enmity against him, loathing him, hatred of him, contrariety to him; it is against his sovereignty, and so is rebellion; against his mercy, and so is unkindness; against his justice, and so is unrighteousness; against his wisdom, and so is folly; against his will, and so is stubbornness. Were it strong enough, it would ungod him; were the sinner's power according to his corrupt heart, he would pluck God out of heaven. I would I were above God, saith Spira. When the body of sin is nailed as a

thief on the cross, yet even then it will rage, as he, and spit out poison against heaven.[1]

Reader, canst thou find in thine heart to hug and embrace such a traitor against the gracious and blessed God? 'To stretch out thine hand against God,' as every sinner doth, 'and strengthen thyself against the Almighty?' Job xv. 25. Stretch out thine hand against God? No man should lift up a word against God; our mouths should shew forth his praise.[1] Stretch out thine hand against God? no man should lift up a thought against God; our meditations of him should be for him. Stretch out thine hand against God? every man should bow down and worship before God, and be satisfied in whatever he saith and doth. Stretch out thine hand against God? thou art bound to stretch out thine heart, and hand, and tongue, to think, and speak, and act, and all for God; and all little enough.

Take sin in its effect, and what evil is like it? It is the cause of all other evils. Dost thou consider the emptiness, vanity, and vexation in the creatures? Eccles. i. 3; the heavens fighting against man, the earth bearing thorns and briers; the diseases in men's bodies, the burning fever, watery dropsy, aching teeth, running gout, racking stone, renting colic, the quivering lips, trembling loins, ghastly looks of dying men; the horrors of conscience, flashes of the internal fire, curses of the law, wrath of God, torments of hell; all these are the fruits of sin. All misery calleth sin mother; this is the root of bitterness upon which they grow: 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom. vi. 21, 23, and v. 12. That big-bellied word death hath all these woeful brats in its belly, and sin is the father that begat them. Sin turned Adam out of paradise, angels into devils, Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, flourishing families, cities, kingdoms, into ruinous heaps; sin shuts heaven against man, laid the foundation of that dark vault of hell; sin kindled the fire of hell; sin feeds it with fuel, and will keep it burning for ever. Oh what an evil is sin! who would not hate it more than hell!

Is it good to play with such fire as sin is? Didst thou believe sin to be the cause of all this, thou wouldst never open thy heart or mouth more for it. Dost thou know that as where the effect is good, the cause is better; so where the effect is bad, the cause is worse? Can there be worse effects than eternal separation from God, and suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? How bad is sin, then, which is the cause of them!

Take sin as a punishment, and it is the evil, the only evil

[1] Omne peccatum est deicidium. [2] *Vide* Car. *in loc.* to this purpose.

there is no suffering like to this, to be given up to a course of sinning. Reader, take heed of continuing an hour longer in thine ungodly practices; it may be thou hast been ready to think it a great happiness to sin without control, to run in the road of the flesh, and to meet with no rubs, to prosper though thou art wicked. I tell thee, and think of it the longest day thou livest, for it highly concerneth thee, that the infinite God never claps a more dreadful curse on any man or woman, on this side hell, than to give them up to sin. If God should give thee up to the sword, famine, most painful diseases, to thy most cruel, potent, and malicious enemies, to be racked by them at pleasure, these were nothing to this, to be given up to one sin. When God hath used his rods, scourging men, and they will not reform, then he takes this axe, and presently execution followeth. To be delivered up to the power of men may be the lot of God's sons, but to be delivered up to the power of sin is the portion of rebels and reprobates.

This is the stinging whip with which God punisheth Ephraim. Ephraim is joined to idols, there is his impiety, 2 Tim. iii. 13; 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11. But what grievous punishment shall he have for his God-provoking idolatry? 'Let him alone,' Hosea iv. 17. It is not, I will send the raging pestilence, or cruel famine, or bloody sword, but he is joined to idols, let him alone; I will not have him disturbed or molested, but he shall have his will, though it prove his everlasting woe, Rom. i. 21, 22; Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12; Hosea viii. 11.

It is a woe with a witness for God to let thy lusts, like so many ravenous lions, loose upon thee, and to lay the reins of thy sins upon thy own neck. We read of one delivered up to Satan, yet he was saved, 1 Cor. v. compared with 2 Cor. vii.; but never of any delivered up to their sins, but they were damned.

It was a sad sight which Abraham saw, when he beheld flakes of fire rained from heaven upon the Sodomites; but it was a sadder which Lot beheld when he saw the fire of hell burning in their hearts, and breaking out in their lives, and his righteous soul was vexed therewith.

Reader, have a care that thou never in thy heart plead more for sin; who would open his mouth for such a monster, when there is no evil like it? Doth God offer thee anything to thy hurt, when he would make a separation between thy soul and thy sins? doth he desire anything to thy disadvantage when he desireth thee to give a bill of divorce to sin, which is the source of all sorrows, the only enemy of thy best friend, the ever-blessed God, and to be given

up to which is the greatest plague and punishment on this side hell? Tell me, is not regeneration excellent, which killeth such venomous serpents, which executeth such traitors, which mortifieth these earthly members, and dasheth these brats of Babylon against the wall!

Thirdly, The price paid for this pearl doth loudly speak its excellency. Reader, little dost thou think what regeneration cost. I tell thee, and thou mayest well wonder at it, the Son of God came from heaven, suffered the boundless rage of devils, and infinite wrath of God, in man's nature, upon this very errand, to purchase regeneration and sanctification for poor sinners. Read and admire: 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,' 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. See the worth of this ware by that which it cost, the precious blood of Christ; surely it was a jewel of inestimable value which the Son of God thought worth his precious blood.

As lightly as thou thinkest of the death of sin, and the life of righteousness, the Lord Jesus underwent more than any one in hell feels, to buy them of his Father for the sons of men. Ah, none knoweth but God and Christ what it cost to buy off man's debts and guilt, and to procure a new stock of holiness for his poor bankrupt creature to set up with again. 'Who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree, that we being dead to sin might live unto righteousness,' 1 Pet. ii. 24. Had man kept his original purity, the Lord Jesus might have spared all his pains. The second Adam came to restore that jewel to man, of which the first Adam robbed him, Tit. ii. 14; John x. 10. This rare jewel, this choice mercy, was regeneration and holiness, and this Christ looks upon as the full reward of his sufferings. 'He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied,' Isa. liii. 11. The truth is, Christ had exceeding hard labour—the Greek fathers call it unknown sufferings; he had many a bitter pang, many a sharp throe; but for joy that children are born of God, that those throes bring forth a numerous issue of new creatures, he forgets his sorrows. 'He shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.'

Consider, friend, did Christ esteem regeneration worth his blood to merit it, and is it not worth thy prayers, and tears, and utmost endeavours to obtain it? Did Christ come to destroy the works of the devil, which is sin, 1 John iii. 8, and wilt thou build them up? Did the Lord Jesus come to build up the temple of holiness,

and wilt thou pull it down? Did Christ think it worth the while to be reproached, condemned, crucified, and all to make thee holy, and wilt thou be such an enemy to the cross of Christ, as by continuing in sin to deprive him of that which he earned so dearly? Why wilt thou bind thyself to be a slave to Satan, when he redeemed thee with such a vast sum?

Did the merciful God send his Son into the world to bless thee, in turning thee from thine iniquity, and canst thou look upon that great blessing as thy bondage? Acts iii. 26. Believe it, God had servants enough, even angels that are ever ready to do his will, to send ordinary gifts by; surely then it was some extraordinary present that he thought none worthy to carry, and would trust none with but his only Son. God 'sent him to bless you in turning every one of you from your iniquities.' I hope, reader, thou wilt have higher thoughts of holiness, and worse thoughts of sin all thy days. Surely the Son of God was not so prodigal of his most precious blood, as to pour it out for anything that was not superlatively excellent.

Fourthly, Regeneration, and the renewing of man, will appear to be excellent, in that it is the great end of God in his works. The more noble any being is, the more excellent ends it propounds to itself in its working. Thence it is that a man hath higher ends than a beast; the ends of a beast are only to please sense, but the ends of a man are to satisfy his understanding. Hence, also, the ends of a Christian are more excellent than the ends of other men; his being is more noble, and so are his ends—to please, glorify, and enjoy God. How excellent then is that which the infinitely perfect God makes his end! Surely the Most High cannot propound any low ends in his operations. He that is the only wise God must have eminent designs and ends.

Now unclasp the secret book of God's decree, and look into it as far as the word will warrant thee, and thou shalt find that in that internal work of election God had the renewing of man after his image in his eye, and to be his end: 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love,' Eph. i. 4. As an artificer or statuary, that hath many pieces of stone all alike, hewn out of the same quarry, in his yard, sets some apart from the rest in his own thoughts, intending to make some choice statue, some special piece of them.

So when all mankind was before God, he did, in his eternal thoughts, set some apart to be chosen pieces, to be holy and without blame.

Go from God's decree to its execution, from his inward to his outward actions, and thou shalt find thy renewing after his image to be full in his eye, Prov. xvi. 4; Ps. c. 4, 5; Rev. iv. 11. In thy creation he thought of thy regeneration; he made thee, that he might new make thee. Thou art a man, that thou mightst become a Christian. God made thee a rational creature, that thou mightst be made a new creature. He gave thee the matter, in giving thee a body and a rational soul, that thereby thou mightst be capable of the form, which is the impression of his image on both. There must be a tree before it can be hewed and squared for some curious building. God did not make thee to eat, and drink, and sleep, and toil in thy calling, but to honour him, and to live to him, which are the actions of the new creature.

Trace God further, from creation to providence, and therein also thou mayest observe this to be his end. Why doth he send the warm summer of prosperity, and refresh thee with his cheering beams and influences, but to cause thee to blossom, and bud, and ripen in the fruits of holiness? 'There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared,' Ps. cxxx. 4. Why doth he send the nipping winter of adversity, but to kill the hurtful weeds of thy lusts? This is his end in afflicting, even the taking away of sin, Isa. xxvii. 9. He useth the flail that the husks may fall off; when one key will not open the door of thy heart, he will try another. Why doth he interweave mercy and affliction, that his providences towards the children of men are chequer-work, white and black, black and white, mercy and affliction, affliction and mercy, but because his infinite wisdom seeth that this mixture will suit best with his ends, the purifying and renewing his creature? If all the year were summer, the sap of the trees would be quite exhausted; if all were winter, it would be quite buried. If thou hadst nothing in thy body but natural heat, it would burn thee up; if nothing but moisture, it would drown thee; therefore thy radical moisture allayeth thy natural heat, and thy natural heat giveth bounds to thy radical moisture; and each, well tempered, make an excellent constitution of body. If thou hadst nothing but mercy, thou wouldst be wanton and conceited; if nothing but misery, thou wouldst be too much dejected; therefore God sendeth mercy to make thee cheerful, and misery to keep thee awful. The good physician tempereth his drugs wisely, and weigheth them exactly, and so prescribes and gives them as they may best conduce to the carrying on of his own end, the spiritual health of his patients.

Fifthly, Regeneration will appear to be excellent, in that it is the special work of God himself.

Grace is the immediate creature of God; man can ruin, but not renew himself. 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,' John i. 13. Man may lay some claim (though there also God is the principal) to the fatherhood of our fleshly beings, but God alone can lay claim to the fatherhood of our spiritual beings. Holiness is a beam of light darted forth from none but the Sun of righteousness. 'We are his workmanship,' Eph. ii. 10; his workmanship both by way of efficiency and excellency.

How beautiful is that structure which hath such a builder! What a rare work must that be which hath such a workman? Surely that is a choice plant which is of God's own planting. Oh who would not be in love with so fair a child for the Father's sake?

The creation of our outward beings, as we are men, is the work of God. 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me,' Ps. cxix. 73. God makes every man as well as the first man, Job x. 8–10. Nature and natural causes are nothing but the order in which, and the tools with which, he is pleased to work.

Now this work of God is excellent; it is the masterpiece of the visible creation. Man is the fair workmanship of a wise artificer, saith one heathen; the bold attempt of daring nature, saith another. One of the ancients calleth man the miracle of miracles; another, the measure of all things; a third, the world's epitome—the world in a small volume.

The body, which is the worst half of man, is curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, and made in secret, as curious workmen, when they have some choice piece in hand, they perfect it in private, and then bring it forth to the light for men to gaze on. 'In thy book were all my members written,' Ps. cxxxix. 16.

A skilful architect, who is to set up some stately building, will draw a model of it in his book, or upon a table, before he will adventure to set it up, to be sure that it shall be done exactly. So, to shew what an exact piece the body of man is, God is said to work it by the book. But the soul, which is God's work too, is a more exquisite piece; the body is, as it were, the sheath, Dan. vii. 15, the soul is the glittering sword; the body is but the cabinet, this is the jewel; it is by this that man claims kindred with the angels in heaven, and surpasseth all creatures on earth.

Consider then, if this work of God's hands, this visible creation,

be so excellent, how excellent is the invisible creation, the creating man in Christ unto good works? Surely that is curious work, workmanship indeed.

The tables of stone, hewed immediately by the hand of God, and on which he had with his own fingers written the law, was such a piece that mortal eyes could not behold it without astonishment and admiration. What a rare manuscript was that, where the book, the matter, the writing, were all of God's own making and doing! But the writing of the law in the fleshly tables of the heart by the Spirit of God is much more glorious.

I am very willing, friend, to convince thee of the excellency of regeneration, and therefore would speak more to this head. Think of what thou pleasest, which thine understanding can judge excellent, and thou shalt find the image of God far more excellent.

Is wealth excellent? Luke xvi. 1. This is the true riches, 1 Tim. vi. 7; others are but the shadow, this is the substance, Mat. vi. 19, 20; other riches are but for a short time, these are for ever, durable riches and righteousness, Prov. viii. 18. Other riches will go only, as brass farthings, in some particular places, in this beggarly low world of earth, but these, like gold and silver, go in all countries, are current coin even in the higher world of heaven.

Is wisdom excellent? This is wisdom: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning (the word signifieth the apex, the top, the perfection) of wisdom,' Prov. i. 7; Job xxviii. 2. The pious man is the prudent man; he alone can judge rightly of things, set a due price upon things, propound to himself the noblest ends, and use the best means; therefore he is called by way of eminency a man of wisdom, Micah vi. 9. The knowing subtle pharisees, for want of this, were but learned fools, Mat. xxiii. 17. Sinner and fool are synonymous in Scripture: the English word fool is thought to come from the Greek φαῦλος, which signifieth wicked.

Is beauty excellent? Grace is the greatest beauty; the beauty of holiness, Ps. cx. 5. Oh how comely is the new creature! never any saw it but fell in love with it. The spouse of Christ is the fairest among women: 'Thou art all fair, my love, thou art all fair,' Cant. iv. 1. Godliness is such a beauty, that, as I have said before, God himself is taken with it. Sin is a spot, a defilement; this beauty is inward, it sits upon the face of the most noble part of man, the soul, and thereby is the more comely; it is lasting, not liable to the rage of a disease or wrinkles of old age, but always increasing, whilst here, to a greater perfection.

Is pleasure excellent? Godliness is pleasant. Regeneration

brings the soul to its centre, in which it must needs rest, Prov. iii. 17. The very work of serving God is a reward in itself: 'In the keeping of them (meaning God's commandments) there is great reward,' Ps. xix. 11. Observe, in keeping of them. The service of God affords men such satisfaction that God's servants would not leave it for all this world, though they were to receive no recompense in the other world. The precepts of God are sweeter than the honey; how sweet then are his promises!

Is life excellent? This is the true life. Eternal life, saith Augustine, is the true life. This is the seed, the beginning of eternal life, John xvii. 3. All unregenerate men are dead, are but walking ghosts, or moving carcases; their souls are but like salt, to keep their bodies from putrefaction for a season. The heathen said of a vicious man that lived to be old, alluding to mariners, He was much tossed up and down, but sailed not at all.[1] All the time of thy natural life till thou art converted is lost. Paul dates his life from his regeneration. We count not a tree living for standing in a garden if it bring not forth fruit.

Is honour excellent? Holiness is honourable: 'Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord of hosts,' Ps. xciii. 5. It is more honour to be a member of Christ than to be monarch of Christendom. Godliness is the honourable livery which Christ purchased for and bestowed on the society of Christians. He gave himself for his church, 'that he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle,' Eph. v. 27.

In a word, holiness is the honour and excellency of God himself, Exod. xv. 11. He is said to be glorious in holiness; he is called rich in mercy, Eph. ii. 3, but glorious in holiness. His mercy is his treasure, but his holiness is his honour. He sweareth by his holiness: Ps. lxxxix. 35, 'Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.' Great persons, though sinfully, will swear by their titles, by their honours, by that which they glory most in; these are their oaths that are most binding with them. The great God, in whom is no iniquity, sweareth by his holiness, as his crown-glory, his great excellency. He is above thirty times called the Holy One of Israel. This is the excellency which angels and perfect spirits in heaven, and saints on earth, do so much admire him for, Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8.

Nay, as gold, because it is the most excellent metal, is laid not only over pewter and brass, but also over silver itself; so because holiness is the excellency, the perfection of God, it is laid not only

[1] Multum jactatus est, non multum navigavit.—*Sen. ad Paulin.*

over his servants, his sanctuary, his services, his word, his works, his Sabbath, his temple, and everything that belongs to him, Exod. xxiv. 8, and xx. 35; Rev. xvi. 33; Exod. xvi. 23; Ps. cv. 42, but also over all his other choice attributes, Isa. lv. 10. His power is holy power, his mercy is holy mercy, his wisdom is holy wisdom; holiness is the perfection of all his excellent attributes, Ps. cxlv. 17; for were it possible, which is high blasphemy for any to imagine, for those attributes to be separated from his holiness, they would degenerate, his wisdom into craft, his justice into cruelty, his mercy into foolish pity, and his sovereignty into tyranny. It is the holiness of God which poiseth every one. Oh the excellency, the excellency of holiness! who knoweth its worth![1]

Reader, what dost thou think of this third subject of consideration, the excellency of regeneration and holiness, which God requireth of thee for the avoiding of hell and attaining of heaven? Tell me, doth God require anything to thy wrong? If God required of thee to live a thousand years on earth, and to spend all thy time in hunger, cold, nakedness, disgrace, pains, and imprisonment, or otherwise thou shouldst not escape unquenchable burnings, and enjoy eternal life, thou wert worse than mad if thou didst not accept of and obey such a command. How hearty and thankful then should thy acceptance be of Jesus Christ to be thy Lord and Saviour, of dying to sin, and living to, and delighting thyself in, his blessed Majesty, which is all he desireth of thee? Oh do not refuse when thou art so well offered! Is it possible that thou canst read so much of the excellency of regeneration, how it is the image of the glorious God, the destruction of the evil of evils, the fruit of the death of Jesus Christ, the end which infinite wisdom propounds in his workings, the special workmanship of God's own hands, the high honour and perfection of the mighty possessor of heaven and earth, and thy soul not be in love with it, nor breathe after it, oh that I were regenerated? Oh that my soul had those true treasures, those spiritual pleasures, that wisdom, that life, that honour, that beauty, that excellency, which no tongue can commend sufficiently! Oh that the pure image of God were imprinted on me! Oh that Christ might see the travail of his soul upon me, and be satisfied!

I have read that when Zeuxis, the famous painter, had drawn his masterpiece, the picture of Helena, Nicostratus, the Athenian painter, beholding it, stood amazed at its rareness, and admired the exquisiteness of it. There stands by a rich ignorant wretch,

[1] Gurn. Ar., part ii. p. 139.

who would needs know what Nicostratus discovered in it worthy of so much wonder. O friend, saith he, hadst thou my eyes thou wouldst not ask such a question, but rather admire it as I do. It may be, reader, when thou seest the saints admiring the beauty of holiness, ravished with the excellency of God's image, so extremely taken with it that they read, hear, watch, fast, pray, mourn, weep, suffer anything, all things, to enjoy more of it, thou art ready to wonder what they see in holiness worthy of such admiration and such diligent endeavours; but I tell thee, hadst thou their eyes, instead of wondering at them, thou wouldst wonder with them, ay, and work with them too, and that hard, for holiness.

CHAPTER XV.

The fourth subject of consideration, The necessity of regeneration.

Fourthly, Consider the absolute necessity of regeneration; if it were not so excellent, yet it is a thing of absolute necessity, and therefore must not be neglected. It is not a work of indifferency, which may be done or may not be done, but a work of indispensable necessity, which must be done, or thou art undone for ever. Reader, here is an argument which neither the flesh nor world nor devil can answer, and therefore it must not be denied. It is indeed so fruitful a blessing that if thou hast this, thou needest no more; everything that is worth aught is in the womb of it; but it is so needful that if thou hast not this, thou hast nothing; the whole world cannot make up the want of this.

There are many things about which possibly thou spendest much time, and takest much pains, which are nothing at all necessary in comparison of this.

Riches are not necessary; the want of temporal may be supplied by the fruition of spiritual riches. Thou mayest be poor in the world, and yet rich in faith, and heir of a kingdom, James ii. 5. Nay, riches are so far from being absolutely needful, that they may be hurtful to thee. Thou mightst, as the Reubenites, shouldst thou have good land here, take up short of the land of promise. Christ calleth riches thorns, Mat. xiii. 22; and surely it is hard to touch them and not to prick thy fingers. How hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven?

Pleasures are not necessary. He that hath little but misery here may find mercy hereafter. Though Job had his sores and

pains, yet he had a right to the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. He that endured hunger, cold, thirst, nakedness, watching, fasting, weariness, painfulness, that was scourged, imprisoned, stoned, yet was a chosen vessel unto God, and heir to a crown of righteousness, 2 Cor. xi. 23–29; Acts ix. 15; 2 Tim. iv. 6. Besides, pleasures may be hurtful to thee; those bees have their stings as well as their honey, and many feed so plentifully on such luscious food that they surfeit themselves. Aristotle speaks of a piece of ground in Sicily which sendeth forth such a strong smell of fragrant flowers to all the fields thereabout, that dogs cannot hunt there, the scent is so confounded with the smell of those flowers. Earthly pleasures do not seldom hinder our scent and sense of spiritual delights.

Honours are not necessary. A man may be condemned and lightly esteemed by men, and yet be commended and highly esteemed by God. Disgrace may be the way to glory. Joseph went through a prison into a palace, and Jesus from a shameful cross to a glorious crown. Honours also may be hurtful to thee. Some climb so high that they break their necks. Those that are in high places are apt to have their heads giddy, and thereby are in great danger of falling. Haman's height and glory brought him to be high at last on the gallows.

Friends and relations are not necessary. He that is friendless on earth may be a favourite of heaven; when no man stood by Paul, the Lord was with him and strengthened him; when David's father and mother forsook him, God took the care of him. When those stars vanished, the sun arose. These also may be hurtful to thee; thou mayest catch their diseases. Amnon was the worse for Jonadab, and Ahab the more wicked for Jezebel.

Health is not necessary. A distempered body may have a healthy soul. When the outward man decayeth, the inward man may be renewed day by day. No disease, so it be not spiritual, can keep the physician of souls from visiting his patients: sanctified sickness is far better than unsanctified soundness.

Nay, life itself, which is far more worth than all the foresaid particulars, is not necessary but in order to this spiritual life of regeneration; if that work be done, a man by losing his life may be a gainer. Some by yielding up their leases, which were but for a term of years, have got the fee-simple, the inheritance, for ever; by parting with their natural lives they have got possession of eternal life. But, friend, regeneration is absolutely necessary. The emperor told the mariner, when he would have dissuaded him from

going to sea because the waters were rough, and it might endanger his life, It is more necessary that I go than that I live.[1] I tell thee, it is more necessary that thou live spiritually than that thou live naturally: thy riches, honours, pleasures, health, friends, are but toys and trifles to regeneration; and truly life itself is little or nothing worth, but as it makes thee capable of getting and enjoying this. Oh what a poor empty shadow is the life of the greatest prince that is a stranger to fellowship with God, which regeneration bringeth the soul to!

The reason why these forementioned things are not necessary, is partly because the want of all these things may be made up in the enjoyment of God. 'Verily I say unto you, that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit upon his throne, shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' Mat. xix. 28. 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold in time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and land, with persecution; and in the world to come life everlasting,' Mark x. 29, 30. The regenerate, though never so poor, naked, disgraced, sickly, yet in the sun they have all those beams, and much, much more. As Alexander told Parmenio, when in the beginning of a battle he was earnest with him to send some forces to regain their weapons and baggage then newly lost, Let us secure the main battle, for if the field be won, we shall recover all our baggage with advantage. So if the soul be safe, being by regeneration grafted into Christ; if thou winnest the main battle against sin and Satan, thou wilt recover those with advantage. Those things are not necessary, partly because the want of them will not undo a man for ever; a man's eternal estate may be secured, though these things be removed; but regeneration is indispensably necessary, because nothing can make up the want of it; not all the golden mines in India, nor the sweetest paradise of earthly pleasures, nor the highest chair of state, nor friends, nor kindred, nor health, nor strength, nor life, can make up the want of this. If this be wanting, thy God is wanting, thy Christ is wanting, thy heaven, thy happiness, thy all is wanting. The want of this will undo thee for ever; it will make thee miscarry in the ocean; this leak will sink thee eternally. It is a standing law of heaven, that except a man be converted, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, Mat. xviii. 3.

[1] Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam.

There is, in regard of the ordination of God, as great a necessity of regeneration as of Jesus Christ; for what advantage canst thou have by all the riches and revenues of the Son of God till by regeneration thou art married to him and made one with him? Observe, reader, this fourfold necessity of regeneration.

It is necessary in regard of God's precept, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 31, 32; Isa. i. 16, 17; Jer. iii. 1; Hosea xiv. 1; James iv. 9. There is a necessity either of hearing God's voice or feeling God's hand; either the commandments of God must be obeyed by thee, or the judgments of God must be inflicted on thee. It is a gospel precept, Eph. iv. 23, 24; now gospel precepts must be minded by all that would partake of gospel privileges.[1]

It is necessary in regard of the purpose of God. 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,' 1 Pet. i. 2. Though God did not choose men because they were holy, yet he chose men to be holy; though he appointed not men to be saved because they were saints, yet he appointed men to be saints, and then to be saved.

It is necessary in regard of the passion of Christ. He died for sin that men might die to sin; he laid down his life that men might lay down their lusts; his passion is a city of refuge to the penitent, not a sanctuary to the presumptuous. God intended it to help men out of, not to hold them in, the mire of sin. 'He is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him,' Heb. v. 9. He died because men were sinners, but he died that men might be saints: 'He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,' 1 Pet. iii. 18. Now man and God can never be brought together till the enmity which is in the heart of man against God be removed. If ever thou have Christ for thy priest, to satisfy God's justice for thy sins, it is absolutely necessary that thou accept him for thy prince, to subdue thee to his service. Had Christ come to procure man a pardon, and not to restore his lost holiness, he had been a minister of sin; and instead of bringing glory to God, he had set sin in the throne, and only obtained a liberty for the creature to dishonour God without control.[2] Again, saith the same accurate writer, in vain do men think to shroud themselves under Christ's wings from the hue and cry of their accusing consciences, while wickedness

[1] See the necessity of it farther in the reasons of the doctrine and the first use of information.

[2] Gur. Arm., part ii. p. 217.

finds a sanctuary in them. Christ was sent from God, not to secure men in, but to save men from, their sins.

It is necessary in regard of the promises of God. 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Turn to me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn to you, saith the Lord of hosts,' Zech. i. 3. 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you,' James iv. 8. If ever God draw nigh to thee in mercy, thou must draw nigh to him in duty. He that shall have the reward must do the work. The precepts of God must be written on thy heart, otherwise the promises of God shall never fall down on thine head, Isa. i. 16, 17, and lv. 7; 1 Kings viii. 35; Prov. xxviii. 13.

'Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they shall see God,' Mat. v. 8. It is the pure heart alone that hath the assurance of the pure heaven.

Thou seest now, I hope, clearly the absolute necessity of regeneration; what therefore canst thou think to do with it? Oh ponder this again and again, that there is no escape, no evasion; God will not vary from his law.

Thy dying to sin is necessary; sin must die, or thy soul cannot live. 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,' Rom. viii. 13; Gal. vi. 6, 7. Surely thou canst not think that heaven will be a sty for swine, or a kennel for dogs, that feed on filth and carrion. Believe it, if any iniquity be let go, thy life must go for its life. The jailers paid dear for letting Peter escape, Acts xii.; Herod commanded them to be put to death. Truly, so dear thou must pay for the escape of sin; it will bring the second death, even eternal death, upon thee. Be thy sin as near and as dear as Isaac, it must be sacrificed; be it never so small, it must not be spared. Cæsar was stabbed with bodkins. I have somewhere read that a man and crocodile never meet but one dieth. It is certain sin and the soul never meet but one dieth; if sin live, the soul dieth; if sin die, the soul liveth; there is no parting stakes, or retreating upon equal terms. Maurice of Newport told his soldiers, when he had sent away his boats, that there was no flying, the Spaniards being before them, and the sea behind them; either ye must eat up and destroy those Spaniards, or drink up this ocean. Friend, such is thy case; either thou must destroy thy sins, or drink up the bottomless ocean of the Lord's wrath.

Answer me seriously: thou wilt say thou dost not love such a man so well as to be hanged for him. Dost thou love sin so well as to be damned for it? Dost thou love thy drunkenness, and

swearing, and uncleanness, and scoffing at godliness, so well as to burn eternally in hell for them? Dost thou love thy pride, and worldliness, and lustful thoughts, and atheism, and carnal-mindedness, so well as to be tormented, day and night, for ever and ever, for them? A very coward will fight when he must either kill or be killed. Wilt thou not fight manfully when sin will kill thee, if it be not killed by thee? Ahab, out of foolish pity, gave Benhadad his life when he ought to have slain him; but the requital which Benhadad made was to kill Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 31, 34; such a requital sin will make thee if thou favour it.

'Follow after peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord,'[1] Heb. xii. 14. Observe how peremptory God is in that place, that without holiness no man shall see God. It is not said that without peace no man shall see God, but without holiness no man shall see God. Peace may be broken in the quarrel of truth and holiness, yet for all that a man may see God. Jeremiah was a man of contention, and yet a man for the beatifical vision; but they that are not holy cannot see God. A pure eye only can see a pure God. As the eye which hath dust in it without, or thick vapours stopping the nerves within, cannot see, except it be cleansed from the one and purged from the other, so a man, the eye of whose mind is clouded with the mist of sin, cannot behold God till he be cleansed. The Christian's happiness in heaven consisteth in such a vision of God as shall make him like God, 1 John iii. 2; but a dusky glass cannot represent an image. When the Sun of righteousness shall shine upon a pure crystal glass, a clean unspotted soul, it will cause a glorious reflection indeed.

To wind up this fourth subject of consideration. Reader, affairs of absolute, indispensable necessity should, like weighty things, make a deep impression upon thy spirit. Urge thy soul often with this, that of all things in the world regeneration is the one thing necessary. Let conscience press it on thee, I must be converted or condemned; here is the word of the living God for it, and such a word as cannot possibly go unfulfilled. Oh my soul, what sayest thou to it? Except thou art born again, thou canst not see the kingdom of God. There is a necessity of thy turning in time, or burning eternally. How wilt thou answer this text, and many more, in the other world? Canst thou think to make the infinite God a liar, and in despite of him and his word to escape hell? Oh do not deceive thyself! God will be true, though every man be a

[1] Χωρὶς οὗ, the masculine article, sheweth that it is to be referred to ἁγιασμός.—*Mr Manton on Jude*, p. 38.

liar; therefore set about this work, that is thus absolutely needful, before thou art irrecoverably woeful.

Friend, I would advise thee to do as the patriarchs did. Joseph had told them, that 'except your younger brother come with you, ye shall not see my face,' Gen. xliii. 3-5. Jacob their father would have them, notwithstanding this express assertion, to venture into Joseph's presence without their brother. But what said Judah? 'The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you.' So do thou consider, and lay it home to thy soul, that the great God of heaven and earth hath said, that except regeneration be with thee, be in thee, thou shalt not see his face with comfort; and though thy deceitful heart and the devil may wish thee to venture into his presence in the other world without it, yet do thou reply, The almighty and faithful God hath solemnly protested unto me, that except regeneration be with me, I shall not see him face to face, and enjoy the beatifical vision. Therefore if I be regenerated, I will go and look death, judgment, God, and Christ in the face with courage and comfort; but if I be not regenerated, I may not go, lest I die, lest I be damned eternally; for God hath said unto me, 'Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

CHAPTER XVI.

The fifth subject of consideration, The equity of regeneration, or living to God.

Fifthly, Consider the equity and reasonableness of that which God requireth of thee. I shall now appeal to thine own conscience whether there be not all the reason in the world that thy main work night and day should be to please and glorify the Lord; if all come from him, should not the honour of all be given to him? If he be infinite in wisdom, should he not in all his providences be adored? If he be infinitely faithful, should he not in all his promises be believed? If he be the first cause, should he not in all his precepts be obeyed? If he be infinitely holy, should he not in all our approaches to him be reverenced? If he be infinitely just and powerful, should he not in all his threatenings be feared? If

he be infinitely gracious and perfect, should he not be heartily loved?

Religion is the highest reason, therefore conversion is called conviction, John xvi. 10. When a man's mouth is stopped, and his mind fully satisfied of the reason of living to God, that he hath nothing to object against it, then he is convinced. The offering up of thy soul and body unto God as a living sacrifice is called rational or reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

I shall offer thee three or four questions, and I do verily believe that if thou seriously consider them, thou canst not but be convinced that there is all the reason in the world that thou shouldst presently turn from sin unto God.

First, Is there not all the reason in the world that the work should be for the service and honour of the workman? that he who planted the vineyard should eat of the fruit of it? that he who made thee should be served by thee? He who owneth the ground and buildeth a house may rationally expect the benefit and use of it. May not God, thy landlord, who hath reared and set up thine earthly tabernacle, appoint what conditions he pleaseth in the lease which he granteth thee, how his own house should be employed, not to such and such sordid sinful uses, but to the service and glory of his Majesty? Is it rational that God's house should be employed to the devil's use?

Thy creation is such a tie to subjection that thou canst never answer it. 'Serve the Lord with gladness; he hath made us, and not we ourselves.' David's prayer is to this purpose, 'Thine hands have made me and fashioned me, O give me understanding that I may keep thy commandments,' Ps. cxix. 73, and xcv. 6; Isa. xliii. 7. Let thy conscience be judge; wouldst not thou esteem it injustice for another to have the honour and use of thy works, or of thine own house? The law, which is built upon reason, gives thee the service of thine own goods, houses, and lands; and why shall not God have thy service? With what face canst thou deny him that sowed liberty to reap?

Secondly, Is there not all the reason in the world, that he who lives wholly at another's cost and charge, that is fed, clothed, preserved night and day, protected at home and abroad, supplied with all necessaries, relieved in all his exigencies, delivered in all his extremities by another, should live wholly to him, and do him service?

Dost thou not know that thy being and all thy comforts depend on God every moment? that every bit of bread, every breath of air, every hour's sleep, nay, every minute's abode on this side hell, is

altogether from his bounty and mercy? that thou canst not speak a word, nor think a thought, nor lift a hand, nor stir a foot, nor open thine eyes to see, or thy mouth to eat or drink, without him? It is his visitation that preserveth thy spirit, Job x. 12. In him thou livest, movest, and hast thy being. He is thy shield to defend thee from evil; many mischiefs would daily befall thee; men would kill thee, devils would drag thee to hell;—oh, how they long for thee, and how ready are they to seize thee,—did not the Lord curb and restrain them. Alexander told his soldiers, I wake that ye may sleep. Sure I am, he that preserveth thee never slumbereth nor sleepeth. The Lord is the captain of thy life-guard to protect thee, and thy sun to refresh thee, and, therefore, dost thou not owe him the glory of those mercies which his free grace bestoweth on thee! Thou dost a little under God for the feeding and clothing of thy children and servants, and therefore thinkest that no duty, no service, is great enough for thee. Oh how infinitely art thou bound to God for all thy time, health, strength, food, raiment, house, friend, and every good thing that thou enjoyest! and yet may not God look that thou shouldst make it thy business to serve, please, and glorify him! It was a good vow of holy Jacob, 'If the Lord will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God,' Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. Truly do thou say, as he did, Since the Lord is the God that keepeth me in all my ways, that gives me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, he shall be my God. Oh do not give him ever cause to complain: 'Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, I have nourished and brought up a child, and he hath rebelled against me,' Isa. i. 2.

Thirdly, Is there not all the reason in the world, that wares, or houses, or any other thing, should be for the use and service of him that paid a dear price for them? If thou shouldst buy a beast at a high rate, thou wouldst think thou couldst never have service enough of him. Friend, thou didst cost the blood of the Son of God. Jesus Christ bought thy service at a dear rate. Thou art not thine own, thou art bought with a price; therefore glorify God in thy body and spirit, for they are his, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Thou needest not grudge the Lord Jesus thy time, and talents, thy thoughts, and words, and estate, and the utmost which thou art able to do. Alas! he paid dearly for it. He died that he might be lord of dead and living; that whether we live, we should live unto the Lord; or die, we should die unto him, Rom. xiv. 7, 8. Oh, how little is

thy service worth, that Christ should purchase it with such an infinite sum!

We say of some children, they had need to be dutiful children; they cost their mothers dear, many sharp throes, and great danger of death. Oh, how dutiful hadst thou need to be, who didst cost Christ such hard labour, such throes from God and men, death and devils! Thou art never able to conceive what a price thy Redeemer paid, what pain he suffered, to procure thy service; and wilt thou deny the Lord that bought thee? Pliny saith that blood will quench fire; should not the blood of Jesus Christ quench the fire of thy lusts? In all countries the ransomer of a bondman is to be his lord. No slavery so great as thine was, no price ever paid so great for liberty; therefore no service so great as that which thou owest. If thou hadst done all that he commandeth thee, thou hadst done but thy duty, and mightst say thou wert an unprofitable servant; what art thou then that never didst anything? Oh think of it seriously! Redemption by the blood of the Saviour is a bloody obligation to service, and if thou continuest a rebel it will be a bloody aggravation of thy sin. What evil hath Christ done to thee, that thou walkest contrary to him? Ah, friend, to render good for evil is divine; but to render evil for good is devilish.

Fourthly, Is there not all the reason in the world, that he who hath bound himself apprentice to a master, promised solemnly to be his faithful servant, sealed indentures before witness, engaged himself by vows, covenants, protestations, and oaths, should perform his promises, and walk in everything answerable to his bonds and obligations? Wast not thou in baptism solemnly dedicated to the service of God? Did not thy parents seal the indenture on thy part before the Lord, angels, and men, that thou shouldst live according to the laws, and for the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Hast not thou listed thyself under the colours of Christ, the captain of thy salvation, and sacredly tied thyself to obey his commands, and to fight under his banner against the devil, world, and flesh? and wilt thou run from thy colours, and turn to thine enemies, and conspire and fight against Jesus Christ? It was a custom in the primitive times, that such as were baptized did wear a white stole,[1] a ceremony signifying the purity of life which the baptized were to lead. Now there was one Elpidophorus, who after his baptism turned a persecutor. Muritta, the minister who baptized him, brought forth in public the white stole which Elpidophorus had worn at his baptism, and cried unto

[1] Fulgentes animas vestis quoque candida signat.

him, O Elpidophorus! this stole do I keep against thy coming to judgment to testify thy apostasy from Christ. So be thou assured the water with which, the minister by whom, the people before whom, thou wast baptized, will rise up against thee in judgment if thou dost not walk in newness of life. Luther speaks of one that, when tempted by the devil to sin, answered that she was baptized, and could not yield to him. Remember that thou hast received thy Saviour's press-money, and therefore mayest not fight Satan's battles. Wast thou never partaker of the Lord's supper? Didst thou not then with John stand by the cross of Jesus Christ, and behold his blessed body bleeding under the knife of his Father's wrath? how it was wounded for thy transgressions, bruised for thine iniquities; when thou didst take a sacred oath to be the death of those sins which were the death of our Saviour, and to live to him that died for thee; when thou didst espouse Christ and his quarrel to thyself, and engage to live and die with him; and canst thou, like a dishonest wife, run a-whoring after thy heart-idols, and forget the covenant of thy God?

Was there not a time when thou didst lie upon a sick-bed, and in thine own apprehension wast nigh the gate of death, when thy sinful fleshly life began to fly in thy face? and oh the thoughts which thou hadst concerning thine appearance before God in the other world, and thine endless estate there, when thou didst pray hard, Oh spare me a little, Lord, spare me a little, that I may get some grace, some spiritual strength, before I go hence and be no more seen! when thou didst promise, oh if God would then hear thee, and try thee a little longer in this world, thou wouldst turn over a new leaf, lead a new life, forbear thy former corruptions and evil companions, mind the service and glory of the infinite God, and thine own eternal good? And is all this nothing, now God hath heard thee and delivered thee? Shouldst not thou now hear him and obey him? Did thy sick-bed promises die when thou didst recover? Oh, follow David's practice, 'I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in distress,' Ps. lxvi. 13, 14, and cxvi. 3, 4, 9.

Theodoricus, archbishop of Colen, when the Emperor Sigismund demanded of him the most compendious way to happiness, made answer in brief, thus: Perform when thou art well what thou didst promise when thou wast sick.[1] Friend, look back upon the time when the guilt of thy sins perplexed thee, the fear of death

[1] Ænead. Syl., lib. ii. com. de reb. Alphon.

surprised thee, and the horror of hell began to lay hold on thee, and remember the promises which then thou didst make; and as ever thou wouldst have God trust thee again, be true to thy word; be not as the marble, watery and moist in stormy weather, and yet still retain thy hardness.

These are, I suppose, rational questions, and surely thou canst not but be satisfied of the equity in them. Well, art thou resolved to obey the counsel of God, and to live like a rational creature? Surely here is a threefold, nay, a fourfold cord, which is not easily broken. Canst thou slip those oaths as easily as monkeys do their collars? and break these bands in sunder, as Samson did his cords? Oh consider, that man was possessed with a devil, whom no cords could hold! and without question thou art also, if such bonds, oaths, obligations as these are cannot hold thee, do not draw thee to the Lord, and bind thee to his commandments.

To end this first help to holiness, which is serious consideration, I must request thee to read it again, and weigh the particulars which I have offered to thee. If thou wilt ever be taken, I should think that one of these baits should catch thee: either that the necessity of regeneration should drive thee, or the felicity of the regenerate draw thee, or the misery of the unregenerate affright thee, or the equity of regeneration persuade thee, unto holiness.

Here are all sorts of arguments imaginable. If thou art ingenuous, here is love and mercy to melt thee; if thou art stubborn, here is endless and easeless misery to move thee; if thou art for the best things, here is excellency for to allure thee; if thou art for rational, here is equity to prevail with thee.

Friend, what shall I say to thee? or wherewith shall I overcome thee? Hath not the world conquered thee with arguments which had not the thousandth part of that weight which the least of these hath? And shall not thy maker, preserver, redeemer, prevail with thee, by setting before thee the horror of hell, the happiness of heaven, the beauty of his image, the reasonableness of his service, and the indispensable necessity of thy being his servant? Is it possible that thy soul, so closely besieged round about with fear, and fury, and fire, on the one side; with favour, and love, and life, on the other side, should not surrender unto Christ? What objection canst thou have which here is not answered? what good canst thou desire which here is not offered? and why wilt thou not yield?

It is thy privilege that thou art a subject capable of God's

image; it was man's primitive purity, that he was adorned with the image of his maker. Ah, what a glorious shining piece was he when he came newly out of God's mint! Gen. i. 26; John iii. 6; Gen. vi. 9; Col. iii. 10; Ps. xvii. 15. It is man's unspeakable misery that he hath lost God's image; his recovery here consisteth in having God's image imprinted on him in part; and his felicity and perfection hereafter, in having this image stamped on him fully and completely. And canst thou then be unwilling to be made like unto the blessed God? Surely sin hath bound thee strongly, and Satan possessed thee strangely, if none of these things overcome thee. Friend, art thou not desirous to fare well in the other world? Then ponder these subjects of consideration seriously and frequently when thou liest down, and when thou risest up; when thou goest out, and when thou comest in; thou little thinkest what such serious frequent thoughts may produce. Whilst David was musing a fire was kindled within him, Ps. xxxix. Consider what I have said, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

CHAPTER XVII.

The second help to regeneration: An observation or knowledge of those several steps whereby the Spirit of God reneweth other souls, and a pliable carriage and submission to its workings and motions.

I come now to the second help which I promised towards holiness and regeneration, and that will branch itself forth into these two particulars:

First, An observation or knowledge of those several steps, whereby the Spirit bringeth home wandering sheep into the fold of Christ.

Secondly, A pliable submission to the workings and motions of the Holy Ghost, as at any time he maketh his addresses unto thee.

For the first of these, thou art to understand that conversion is not wrought all together and at once, but by degrees. As in the generation of a child, first the brain, heart, and liver, is framed, next the bones, sinews, nerves, and arteries, then the flesh is added. So in regeneration, first the sinner hath the seed of repentance and faith in the sense of his sins and misery, and the sight of the mercy of

God in Christ, then some desires after Christ, next some affiance on Christ, and after these a hearty acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The match between Christ and the soul is not huddled up in haste. Christ first goeth a-wooing. The Father offereth a large portion with his Son. The creature considereth his terms: how lovely his person is, what his precepts will be, what advantage he shall have by the marriage; and by a deep and powerful energy of the Spirit, consenteth to take him for his lord and husband.

First, The first step is illumination. The Spirit of God doth in the first place open the eyes of the blind, and turn men from darkness to light—here is illumination; and then from the power of Satan to God—here is regeneration, Acts xxvi. 18. Before the Sun of righteousness ariseth on the soul, there is daybreak of light in the understanding. John Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ, and sent to prepare his way before him, did it by giving knowledge of salvation, Luke i. 76, 77.

It is observable, that in the covenant of grace the mind is still spoken of to be renewed before the heart, Heb. x. 8, 9; Jer. xxxi. 33. For it is by the understanding that grace slips down into the affections.

Satan indeed, that cruel jailer, secures his captives in the dark dungeon of ignorance. They are 'strangers to the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them,' Eph. iv. 18. When that uncircumcised Philistine hath taken away Samson prisoner, the first thing he doth is to put out his eyes; when this is done he can make sport enough with him. The evil spirit strikes men blind, as the Syrians were, and then leads them whither he pleases; but the good Spirit opens their eyes, and sheweth them that they are in their enemy's hands, liable every moment to be murdered, and then sets bread and water before them. Conversion is called a translation out of darkness into marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 3.

The sinner travelleth in the dark night of his natural estate, and mistaketh his way, he loseth himself in the mist of ignorance; but when the morning cometh the man seeth that he hath gone in a wrong path, then he befools, and is displeased with himself, and turneth about. All the while the creature hath his understanding darkened he walketh in the way of the flesh and the world, and believeth that to be the right way to happiness; but when the Spirit of God enlighteneth the mind, the man seeth that he was exceedingly mistaken, begins to wonder at his own folly and wick-

edness, to abhor himself and change his course. 'I will bring the blind by a way which they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them;' then what followeth? 'they shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed,' Isa. xlii. 16, 17.

Till the understanding of a man be enlightened to see the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness, he will never heartily loathe and grieve for the former, love and long for the latter. As it is in some hot climates, though the sun shine very hot there, yet when there is no entrance for it into men's houses, it will not scorch or heat the inhabitants. Sin is of a scorching nature; but when the understanding, which is the window into the house, is kept shut, that it can have no entrance into the heart, no wonder if the sinner feel no pain.

God hath made the same organ for seeing and weeping. It is the eye of knowledge which affects the heart. They shall see him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10. Sight of sin doth precede sorrow for sin. As soon as ever the infant cometh into the light, it crieth; though all the time it was in the dark prison of the mother's womb, it was quiet.

Secondly, The second step which the Spirit takes is conviction to convince the sinner, John xvi. 9, 10. The sun, which before did enlighten his mind, doth now slide down with its heating and scorching beams into the conscience. That knowledge which the sinner had of his sins before was speculative, but now become practical, making sin like a lump of lead upon tender flesh, that the conscience is exceedingly pressed and oppressed with it.

Conviction is the application of the nature of sin, and danger of sinners, to himself in particular, which before he knew in the general. As in the twilight, before the sun ariseth, a man may see abroad, but he cannot see in his own house; but when the sun ariseth a man may see both abroad and at home within his own doors; so before the Spirit approacheth the soul in a way of conviction, the sinner could see abroad; he knew that the soul that sinneth must die; that they which do such and such things cannot inherit the kingdom of God. He knew these things in the general, but he could not see in his own house, in his own heart, that he himself was a great sinner, a dead, a damned creature; for though he would in his prayers acknowledge that he had broken the law, and was thereby liable to the wrath of the Lord, yet he did it but customarily and formally, not believing what he spake; for should another man come to him and tell him, O friend, you daily provoke

God, and are every hour in danger of hell, he would fly in his face and tell others that he was a very uncharitable man, and all because the sinner could not see in his own house. But when the Sun of righteousness ariseth, the sinner can see within as well as without doors; he seeth the heinous nature of his own sins, and the grievous danger of his own soul.

The Spirit of God convinceth the sinner of four things.

First, The Spirit convinceth him of his great and innumerable corruptions. The man before knew in the general that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and would confess himself a sinner formally and slightly; but now he feels himself a sinner, and finds experimentally that he is a polluted, poisoned creature. The Spirit of God holdeth the glass of the law before the eyes of his soul, and makes him, whether he will or no, see what dirt and deformity is in the face of his heart and life. Without the law there is no transgression, and without the knowledge of the law there will be no conviction. As one of the persecutors in the days of Queen Mary, searching a house for a protestant, asked an old woman in the house, Where is the heretic? She points to a chest of linen, upon which stood a looking-glass, and bid him look there and he should see him. He looked there, and still asked, Where is he? She meant that he himself was the heretic, and in the glass he might see himself. So before the Holy Ghost came to convince this sinner, if the minister at any time had preached against pride, unbelief, carnal-mindedness, hypocrisy, and the like, his voice was, Where are these men? Surely the minister meets with such and such in his sermon! But now the Spirit in his conscience speaketh to him, what Nathan did to David, Thou art the man. Thou art the proud, carnal, hypocritical, cursed sinner, which the word of God meaneth, and the man cannot deny it. The Holy Ghost pulls off his rags and plasters, and makes him see all his nakedness and sores; it lanceth his wounds before his eyes, and now he beholdeth the venomous matter and corruptions which is in them, that he little thought of before.

Formerly he esteemed himself to be sound, comparing himself with them that were worse, or not minding the inward meaning and extent of the law of God; but now by the law the Spirit brings him to the knowledge of sin, Rom. vi. 7. It sheweth him the depravation of his nature, how full it is of pollution, even as full as ever toad was of poison; how empty it is of all good; nay, what an enemy it is to God and godliness. It sheweth him the abominations of his heart, how the imaginations and thoughts of his

heart have been evil, only evil, and that continually; the provocations of his life, how full that hath been of lusts and sins, even as the firmament of stars. It sheweth him the evil of his thoughts, of his words, of his deeds; his omissions in his closet, in his family; his commissions abroad, at home. It sheweth him his idolatry, in setting up self as his God, in bowing down to it, and worshipping it; his adultery in going a-whoring after the creatures, loving, fearing, and trusting them more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. It sheweth him how he hath dishonoured the name of God, grieved the Spirit of God, undervalued the Son of God, violated every command of God; how he hath sinned against the first command, in not worshipping and glorifying God as the only true God and as his God, and in giving that honour to others which is due to him alone; against the second, in not worshipping God according to the word, but according to the traditions of others, or his own inventions; against the third, in not reverencing the name, word, and works of God; against the fourth, in not sanctifying the Sabbath to God's service, but profaning it, either by idleness, or worldly labours, or omission of duties and ordinances; against the fifth, in not carrying himself according to his duty towards them that are above him, equal to him, or below him; against the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth, in wronging his neighbours, either in regard of life, chastity, goods, name, relations, either in thought, words, or actions.

It sheweth him the darkness of his understanding, the stubbornness of his will, the disorderedness of his affections, the hardness of his heart, the searedness of his conscience, the misimprovement of his outward parts; how his eyes have beheld vanity, his ears been open to iniquity, all his senses been thoroughfares to sin, all the members of his body instruments of unrighteousness; how from the crown of the head to the soles of his feet there is no sound part in him, nothing but wounds, bruises, and putrified sores.

It is not one or two sins that trouble this sinner, but innumerable evils compass him about; whole swarms of these bees fly in his face and sting his conscience. It may be one sin did first set upon him, some sin against the light which God had given him, and now that creditor hath cast him into prison, all the rest come and clap their actions upon him to keep him there; his sins in his dealings with men, in his duties to God; his sins against seasonable corrections, against merciful dispensations; his sins against the motions of God's Spirit, against the conviction of his own spirit, against light, love, purposes, promises; they all compass the

sinner round that he cannot escape. Now he sees the ugly loathsomeness of his lusts, how they are against an infinite God, against a righteous law, against a precious soul; how by reason of them he is wholly unlike God, and become the very picture of the devil; and truly now he is far from having those flattering thoughts of himself, and favourable thoughts of his sins, which formerly he had. For sin's part, it is abounding, polluting, poisonous, sinful sin. He seeth the wrinkles of this Jezebel's face under her paint; and oh how ugly is she in his eyes! And for himself, he is more out of love than ever he was in love with himself. Some say after they have had the small-pox, that they come to see themselves in a glass, they look so ugly by reason of their spots that they cannot endure to see themselves. Truly this poor sinner, beholding himself in the glass of the law, and viewing those hellish spots of sin all over his soul and body, he abhorreth himself in dust and ashes.

This is the first thing the Spirit convinceth the soul of, and that is sin: 'When he is come, he shall convince the world of sin,' John xvi. 8. God never cured a spiritual leper but he caused him to fall down first and cry out, Unclean, unclean.

Secondly, The Spirit convinceth him of his miserable and dreadful condition. Now the commandments of God come to the soul, sin reviveth, and the sinner dieth. He thought before that he was whole, a sound man, to have little need of a physician; but now he both seeth his sores and feeleth his wounds.

Ministers before had frequently told him of his dangerous, damnable estate, but he had a shield to keep off all their darts. He was not so bad as they took him to be; somewhat they must say for their money. And besides, though he were as bad as such precise, censorious preachers would make him to be, yet God was a merciful God, and Jesus Christ died for sinners, and he hoped to be saved as well as the best of them. But now God comes to him as he did to Adam after his fall, 'Adam, where art thou? Hast thou eaten of the tree of which I said unto thee thou shalt not eat?' Sinner, where art thou? Dost thou know what thou art doing, and whither thou art going? How darest thou profane my day, blaspheme my name, scoff at my people, neglect my worship, cast my laws behind thy back, and hate to be reformed? Darest thou provoke the Lord to anger? Art thou stronger than he? How will thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee? Dost not know, poor dry stubble, that it is a fearful thing to fall into my hands? for I am a consuming fire. Now the sinner heareth the voice of God, and is

afraid. Alas, alas! thinks he, I am a dead, a damned man; the almighty God is angry; the weight of my sins at present is heavy; but the sufferings which I am every moment liable to, are infinite and eternal. Oh that I should ever be born to do as I have done! Now the lightnings of divine fury flash in his eyes, and the cannons of the law's curses thunder in his ears; he seeth a sharp sword of pure wrath hanging by a slender thread of life over his head; he feeleth the stingings of his sins, those fiery serpents, at his heart. There is no rest in his flesh because of God's anger, nor quietness in his bones because of his sins. The arrows of the Almighty are within him, and the poison thereof drinks up his spirit; the waves and billows of God go over his soul, and he sinketh in deep waters; God writeth bitter things against him, and makes him to possess the sins of his youth. Now the man is calmed, he will hear what God speaketh: before, though God himself had told him out of his word what a wicked wretched man he was, he would not mind it, but storm and rage at it; he was like a wild ass snuffing up the wind, and as an untamed heifer impatient of the yoke; he would kick and fling like a madman. What! he give credit to the doctrine, and submit to the severe discipline of a few whimsical puritans, that must be wiser than all their neighbours! No, not he, though they shewed him the very hand of God in Scripture to those warrants which they desired him to obey. But now he is of another mind, for the law hath shut him up under sin and guilt, Gal. iii. 22. The law hath pent him in and shut him up that he cannot possibly get out. As lions, bears, and wild beasts are tamed by being shut up and kept in, so the law causeth wrath, Rom. iv. 15, shuts the sinner up under it, and keeps him in, that his former starting-holes cannot help him; and thereby tames him.

While he was convinced of his sins and misery, his conscience was seared, not troubled at all the threatenings which were denounced against him; but now his conscience is sore, touch it which way you will, you put him to pain; tell him under this conviction of his drunkenness, or swearing, or atheism, or eagerness after this world, and heartlessness about the things of the other world, his neglecting God in secret, of not instructing and praying with his family; tell him how cold and customary he was in his devotion, saying to others that they took more pains for heaven than they needed to do; of his justifying himself in his transgressions, and taking part with Satan against his own soul; he crieth, guilty, guilty, when such bills of indictment are read against him; but every word in them is a deep wound to him; the wolf in the

breast, and worms in the belly, do not cause half that pain which his wickedness doth by gnawing in his conscience. Tell him of the gospel, how infinitely merciful God is, and how inconceivably meritorious Christ is, and how freely the glad tidings of the gospel are offered to all. Oh, this toucheth him to the quick! the sword of the gospel cuts him more to the heart than the sword of the law. Oh, saith he, this, this is my death; were it not for this, I should have some hopes of life; but, alas! I have abused mercy, which is the only friend I have left; I have despised Christ, and neglected the great salvation which was tendered to me in the gospel. Vile creature that I am! mercy, love, and grace came many a time wooing me. How did Jesus Christ himself with pardon and life come beseeching me, begging of me to open my heart and let him in; and yet, cursed wretch that I was, I denied him! When the world could lie warm in my bosom all night, and sin get a good room in my soul, yet my Saviour must stand without, and not be thought worthy to be let in! I have most unworthily spurned against his bowels of compassion, scorned his sweetest and most affectionate persuasions, most desperately refused the only means of my recovery; and therefore I, what shall I do? whither shall I go? If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? 1 Sam. ii. 25. If I had sinned only against my Creator, my Redeemer might have satisfied for me; but I, wretched I, have sinned against my Redeemer, and therefore who shall entreat for me? Oh the frights, and fears, and horrors, and terrors, which this poor creature suffereth under the sight and sense of his sins and guilt! but the forethoughts of an everlasting miscarriage in the other world sinks him quite down, that he is able to hold up no longer. Thus the Spirit first plougheth up the fallow-ground of the heart, before he casteth into it the seed of grace. He first captivates the sinner, and brings him into a spiritual dungeon, under chains of guilt and horror, that the very irons enter into his soul, before he proclaimeth liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. Some indeed are brought lower than others with legal terror; but surely not a few have sailed to heaven by the very gates of hell. God is resolved that men shall feel sin either here or hereafter.

Thirdly, The Spirit convinceth him of the impotency and weakness of all the things in the world to help him, that in the whole garden of nature there is never an herb which can make a salve to heal his wounded conscience. Now the sinner is scorched with the

heat of God's wrath; he is like a man in a burning fever, full of pain, and he tumbleth and tosseth from one side of the bed to the other, trying and hoping for ease; he goeth to this carnal comfort, or that human help, to have his pain abated, and his sores cured; but none of them will do; as fast as he claps on those carnal plasters, the Spirit causeth his conscience to rub them off.

It may be first the man useth foreign drugs; he being troubled in conscience, goeth with Cain to the building of cities, to earthly employments, that the noise of the hammers might drown the voice of conscience; that his mind and body being occupied about other things, conscience might have no time nor leisure to proceed in preaching its cutting lectures; or else, like Saul, he runneth to his music, to carnal contentments, to merry meetings, jovial companions, his preferment or pleasures in the world, or some carnal diversion, if it be possible to turn the water of his thoughts into another channel, and so keep that mill from going which makes such a clacking dreadful noise in his ears, and threateneth to grind him to powder. Thus sinfully foolish is man; as soon as ever a fire is kindled in his soul, which would aspire to heaven, he runneth with his buckets to earthly springs, and fetcheth water thence to quench it; the throes of the new birth do no sooner come upon him, but he, like some simple woman, takes cooling things, which cause his labour to go back again. But the Holy Ghost (for I am now speaking of one in whom the Spirit goeth through with the work) makes all these things empty to him; the virtue of those poor cordials is soon spent, and now the man is as sick as before. Conscience, for all these interruptions, still follows him with this hue and cry by a warrant from heaven, for the breach of God's statutes, that the sinner can house nowhere in any of these worldly comforts, but conscience is at his heels, raising the town upon him, and giveth him no rest; the man finds this physic but like hot water to one in a cold fit of an ague, which warms a little at present, but makes his hot fit the more violent.

When the sinner finds that his exotical drugs will not cure him, he will try in the next place kitchen physic; he will be his own both doctor and apothecary; he hopeth that his praying, and grieving, and trouble of mind, and resolution to be better, will satisfy God's justice, and pacify his own conscience, and heal it thoroughly. Oh, how the man endeavours to lick himself whole! Man is a proud creature, unwilling to beg or borrow of his neighbours, very solicitous rather to make a poor shift with what he hath of his own. The mariners will row hard in a storm to get to

shore by their own power, before they will awake Jesus with Save us, Master, or we perish.

But the Spirit convinceth him of the insufficiency of all his prayers, and tears, and duties to appease God, or satisfy his law; the Spirit sheweth him the narrowness and shortness of all his rags, how they cannot possibly cover his nakedness; conscience telleth him that, by his very duties, he is so far from paying his old score, that he runneth further in debt. Alas! saith conscience, thy very duties may damn thee; he who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity seeth a thousand holes in thy best coat; the holy God seeth sins enough in them to send thee into hell for them. Canst thou, poor beggar, with thy counterfeit farthings, think to pay an infinite sum? Can thy poor finite performances satisfy infinite justice for the violation of his righteous precepts? And for thy resolutions of better obedience, canst thou think that future obedience can satisfy for former disobedience? No, though thou couldst offer thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, nay, though the first-born of thy body, all these could not be a propitiation for one of the least sins of thy soul. No, no, the redemption of a soul is more precious; for all these it must cease for ever.

Thus God ferrets the sinner out of all his burrows, and causeth the poor prodigal, while he is wandering from his father, to find a famine in all the creatures. As a general that besiegeth a city, doth not only play in upon it with his cannons and grenadoes, but also secure the several passages, stop all provision, that no relief can come to it, then they will yield upon his terms; so when the Spirit besiegeth the soul, it often plieth it hard with the batteries of the law, and always stoppeth relief from coming in, either from the world or a man's own righteousness; and then, and not till then, will the creature yield upon the terms of the gospel.

Fourth, The Spirit convinceth him of the willingness, suitableness, and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ to help and heal him.

The sinner now in his burning fit is very thirsty; like Hagar, he sits weeping, for his bottles are empty, and his creature-comforts are found by experience to be broken cisterns which can hold no water; he knoweth not what to do; how can I see the death of my soul? thinks he. When the sinner is brought to this strait, the Spirit of God openeth his eyes to see a well of salvation, even Jesus, who delivereth from the wrath to come.

The Spirit discovereth to the sinner, that though his wound be dangerous, because the God whom he hath provoked is resolved

either to have his law satisfied, or his eternal wrath endured, yet that it is not desperate, for there is balm in Gilead, and a physician in Israel, that can heal his soul.

It convinceth him that Christ is a suitable help—bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, rest to the weary and heavy-laden; that he hath a precious salve made of his own blood, which is a proper and peculiar remedy for his sores.

It convinceth him that Christ is an all-sufficient help; that he can supply all the soul's wants, be they never so many, and bear all the soul's iniquities, be they never so weighty; that he is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, Heb. vii. 25. It presenteth to the soul his fitness and fulness in regard of his natures and offices, and the impossibility of his being unfaithful to this great work of saving poor sinners, for which he came into the world. It sheweth the sinner the infiniteness of Christ's merits, and his omnipotency to help, because he is God; the examples of other wounded diseased persons, who surrendered themselves to the care of this physician and were cured. He shall convince the world of righteousness, 'because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more,' John xvi. 10; that is, the world shall be convinced that there is righteousness enough in me to satisfy both the law and lawgiver, in that I shall appear in my Father's presence, and that with acceptance. He would not send an angel as his officer to roll away the stone, and release the surety out of prison, the grave, and bring him before the judge with so much credit and countenance, if the law were not satisfied and the debt fully discharged. Heaven could never have held me; ye would have seen me upon earth again, if I had not done that work perfectly which the Father gave me to do. 'He shall convince the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father.'

It convinceth him that Jesus Christ is exceeding willing to save poor sinners; that he is joyful that any will accept him for their Saviour; that he came from heaven to earth, was born meanly, lived miserably, and died shamefully, merely upon this errand, that he might seek and save them that are lost; that he inviteth him to come to him, and promiseth that he shall be welcome; that he calleth them that go from him, but casteth away none that come to him.

Thus when the prodigal is in a far country, and cannot fill his belly so much as with husks, that he is ready to perish for hunger, he is shewed and convinced that there is bread enough in his father's house. When the sinner is, like the Israelite in the wilderness, beholding the curse of the law like the Egyptian behind him,

and pursuing him hard, the red sea of divine wrath before him, into which he is hastening, his crimson and bloody sins like mountains on each side of him, encompassing him round, that he knoweth not what to do, then the Spirit biddeth him look up to Jesus, and he shall see the salvation of God.

The third step which the Spirit takes is anhelation, to cause the soul of the convinced sinner to breathe and pant after Jesus Christ. Breath is the first effect of life. Conviction hath emptied his stomach of creature confidence, and self-righteousness made him poor in spirit, and oh how hungry he is after the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the bread which came down from heaven! As the thirsty ground cleaves and opens for drops, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth his soul after Jesus Christ, God blessed for ever: thinks he, Oh when shall I come and appear before him! His voice is, like Rachel, Give me children or I die; give me the holy child Jesus or I die; or like Abraham, Lord, what wilt thou give me if I go childless? Oh what wilt thou give me if I go Christless! or like the Jews to Philip, Sir, we would fain see Jesus. If the angel should meet him, he might bespeak the soul as he did the woman, 'I know what thou seekest, thou seekest Jesus which was crucified.' Oh the ardent desires, the vehement longings, the unutterable groans, which this poor creature hath after his Saviour! as David, he crieth out, Who will give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem! Where is that blessed guide that can lead me, and help me to drink of the water of life!

Methinks I see how Jesus Christ presents himself to the eye of the dejected soul's understanding, in all his glory and gallantry, in his suitableness unto the sinner's indigencies, and sufficiency for all his necessities, with the freeness of his mercy, the fulness of his merits, the sweetness of his love; how he appears before the soul with his retinue and train of graces, comforts, his blood, his Spirit, the favour of God, freedom from sin, wrath, hell. On the one hand of him there stand his gracious promises of pardon, peace, adoption, sanctification, heart-cheering love, and everlasting life; on the other hand of him there stands his precious precepts of self-denial, crucifying the flesh, walking after the Spirit, despising the sensual pleasures, honours, and profits of this world, and delighting in God, walking with him, having the conversation in heaven, and rejoicing in hope of glory. In the middle there stands the fairest of ten thousands, adorned as a bridegroom with his richest attire, glistering with the jewels of those graces with which his humanity is adorned, in a greater degree than the heavens could, though

every star in it were a glorious sun; but oh how the diamond of his deity sparkleth in the soul's account, that millions of worlds would be but a muck-heap to it! Ah how lovely is he in the sinner's eye! How infinitely ravishing to his heart! How blessed are those souls, thinks this sinner, that are interested in such a Saviour! Inconceivably happy is that spouse which hath so beautiful, so accomplished, so lovely, so loving a husband; God is hers, earth is hers, heaven is hers, all is hers; holiness is her nature, and happiness is her jointure. Oh that I, oh that I might be so blessed as to be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb! Who can express the vehement, violent longings of this man after Christ, as the loadstone of his affections, as the only centre of his soul, the proper remedy for all his maladies; had he the beauty of Absalom, the renown of Solomon, the wealth, the worth of the whole world, like the wise merchant, he would sell all to buy this pearl of price, and think it the best bargain that ever he made; nothing is so dear to him but he will give it; nothing is so difficult but he will do or suffer for Christ; he is of the same mind with the martyr, None but Christ, none but Christ. It is reported of a woman that was in these throes, that she should say, I have brought nine children into the world with as much pain as most women, yet I would bear them all over again, and bear them all my days for Christ.

There is mention made of a bird in Egypt, near Nilus, called the bird of paradise, which they say, if it be once ensnared, is unquiet and mournful till she be delivered: so is this convinced sinner, now he feels himself entangled in the bond of iniquity and snares of the devil, he is unquiet till he be delivered. Talk to this man of his respect, and friends, and riches in the world, they are as the white of an egg, or a dry chip, without any savour, relish, or nourishment to him; but tell him of Jesus Christ, an able surety to discharge all his debts, oh that is the savoury meat which his soul loveth. As a man that is sick and extremely pained, when you talk to him of his calling or estate, he heareth not, he regardeth not; but tell him of one that can cure him of his disease, and ease him of his pain, then he will hearken to you; thus it is with this sinner; all his delight is in hearing of Christ, all his longing is to hear from Christ. The poor prisoner that is condemned to be hanged, and hath sent a messenger to sue for a pardon, never longed so much for his return with joyful news, as this poor creature for an interest in the Mediator.

Thus the Spirit having convinced the soul of its beggary and nakedness, bondage, and misery, causeth it to breathe and long after the riches, liberty, and righteousness which is in Christ.

The fourth step is lamentation. The soul that breatheth after a Saviour is truly broken for his sins; his groans after liberty are accompanied with grief for his slavery. Now the clouds gather and thicken over the soul, and fall down in tears; his sorrow under the conviction of his misery was legal, but now it is for his abuse of mercy, and so evangelical. His heart before was as a cloud broken by a thunderbolt, being torn in pieces violently, and making a mighty noise; but now, like the cloud melted by the shining of the sun upon it, it dissolves down sweetly into a fruitful shower.[1] He looked on sin before as it was damning, as that which would cast his soul and body into hell; but now he looks on sin as it is defiling, as that which makes him unlike to God, and as that by which he hath abused love and mercy; and the consideration of this warmeth his heart, and kindly thaweth it. The man hath now some small hope of mercy, and that, like the nearer approach of the sun, softeneth that earth which was hardened under the frost of legal terror.

The pump of the sinner's heart was dry, till the water of gospel-grace, apprehended and hoped for, was poured in, and then it sendeth forth abundantly. He returneth now to God with supplication, weeping, and mourning; as Joseph, so this sinner seeketh for a place to weep in; he goeth into his chamber, falleth down before God, and poureth out his heart at his eyes and tongue; he accuseth, shameth, condemneth, abhorreth himself because of his sins. He doth not dissemble his birth, but acknowledgeth the pollution of his conception: 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me,' Ps. li. 5; he confesseth the transgressions of his life, that he hath gone astray from the womb, Ps. lviii. 3, that ever since he was able to go, he went astray; he acknowledgeth his transgressions, and is sorry for his sins; with Ephraim, he smites upon his thigh, saying, What have I done? with the publican he beats on his breast, crying out, 'God be merciful unto me a sinner;' with the prodigal, he is ashamed to look up to God, yet sighs out, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am unworthy to be called thy child.' He throweth himself down at God's feet, bemoaning himself thus: Lord, I am the greatest of sinners, less than the least of all thy mercies; I have defaced thine image, broken thy laws, sinned against thy majesty; against thee, thee I have sinned, and done evil in thy sight; I have done the work of Satan thine enemy, and my wages is nothing but death; how thou pleasest to deal with thy worthless creature I know not;

[1] Nemo possit pœnitentium agere, nisi qui speraverit indulgentiam.—*Amb.*

but however thou deal with me, thou art righteous, and I will lay my hand on my mouth; if thou say thou hast no pleasure in me, lo, here I am, do with me what seemeth good in thy sight; yet oh save my soul! Ten thousand hells are my portion; but if out of thy bottomless mercy thou shalt pluck my feet out of this bottomless misery, my soul shall admire thy free grace, my tongue shall sing aloud of thy rich mercy; and oh the obligation which this vile wretch shall have to be faithfully and uprightly serviceable to thy Majesty!

His contrition runneth all along parallel with his confession; his heart worketh more than his lips and hands; his affections are much more self-abasing and humbling than his expressions. He seeth him whom he hath pierced, and mourneth; Calvary is a Bochim, a place of weeping to him; his eyes are so full, that though Christ be nigh him, yet, like Mary, he cannot see him for tears. Never fountain sent forth water more freely than this sinner doth godly sorrow; when he considereth what he hath done, how he hath sinned, what a God he hath grieved, sorrow and grief overwhelm his spirit.

The fifth step is implantation into Christ; the Spirit now leadeth the child by the hand unto Christ, nay, grafteth him into Christ. The soul being convinced of the necessity it stands in of Christ, of the endless misery which it must undergo without Christ, of the all-sufficiency that is in Christ, how willing, how able he is to bind up the broken heart, and to save the sinful soul, doth by the help of the Holy Ghost venture itself, and its everlasting estate, upon Jesus Christ, resolving to stand or fall, live or die, at his feet.

The sinner is now between hope and fear, not knowing how he shall fare. As the four lepers that were shut out of the city in the famine of Samaria, considered with themselves, 'If we enter into the city, the famine is in the city, and we die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die,' 2 Kings vii. 3, 4; and accordingly they went to the Syrians' camp, found food there, and lived; so the sinner pondereth in his heart: If I go to the world, and lying vanities thereof, I perish; vanity of vanities is written upon all its enjoyments; the famine is there, there is nothing that is bread; its whole shop cannot afford a plaster which can heal my wounded conscience; if I sit still in this condition, under the weight of mine iniquities, I perish; they will unquestionably sink me into hell. Now therefore I will fall into the hands of the Lord Jesus; if he

save my soul I shall live; if he deny to receive such an unworthy wretch as I am, I shall but die, I can but perish: I will therefore venture. And accordingly the soul goeth to him, and findeth life in him. I have sometimes thought that when the sinner is come thus far, he carrieth himself much like Esther. When the king had made an irrevocable decree for the destruction of herself and people, what doth she do? she fasteth and prayeth, and sendeth word to Mordecai, 'I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish,' Esther iv. 16. Thus the poor broken-hearted sinner, perceiving that the King of kings hath made a decree that the soul that sinneth shall die eternally, and he is a grievous sinner, he fasteth, he mourneth, he prayeth, and at last resolveth, Well, I will go in unto the King, though it be not according to the law, which shutteth me up under guilt and wrath: if I perish, I perish; possibly he may hold out the golden sceptre of grace, and I may live in his sight. Thus the poor creature goeth, maketh supplications believingly, and prevaileth.

The devil now layeth all the blocks he can possibly in the soul's way to hinder its journey to Christ. As when the woman talked to her husband of going to the prophet for the enlivening of her dead child, he presently endeavoureth to dissuade her, that it would be to no purpose. Why wilt thou go? it is neither new moon nor Sabbath. But yet she went, and had her child restored to life. Thus to what purpose shouldst thou go to Christ? saith the devil to the penitent sinner. Canst thou think that so holy and righteous a God will have the least respect for such a wicked, notorious, hell-hound as thou art? I tell thee, he hath sent thousands, that never sinned as thou hast done, into hell; and canst thou have any thoughts of heaven? Thou hast done my work all thy days, and now lookest for a reward from God. No, no, I will pay thee thy wages in blackness of darkness for ever. If thou hadst intended for life, thou shouldst have minded it sooner; thou hast days without number broken the law, and many a time rejected the gospel, and now it is too late. God called, and thou wouldst not hear; now thou mayest call long enough, for he will not hear thee. He tells thee as much with his own mouth, Prov. i. 25–32. Therefore thou mayest spare thy pains and prayers, for all will be to no purpose. Surely thou hast an impudent face and a brazen forehead to expect such choice blessings as pardon and life from that Christ whom thou hast persecuted in his people, rejected in his laws, preferring the world and the flesh before him, and daring him to his very face. Thus he that was the sinner's tempter to those sins,

turns his tormentor for them; and he that, when the soul was posting to hell, bade it not doubt of heaven, doth, now the creature is creeping towards eternal life, persuade him that it is impossible to escape eternal death. But notwithstanding these discouragements, the sinner will go to the great Prophet of the church for the life of his dead soul. He thinks, it is true I am a grievous sinner, but I know that he is a gracious Saviour. I see nothing but misery and hell in me, but I see mercy and heaven in him; for my warrant I have his precept, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,' Mat. xi. 28; for my encouragement I have his promise, 'I will give you rest.' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,' John vi. 37. I will therefore go, whatever come of it, and lay myself at his feet; if he condemn me, and spurn me into hell, I will justify him; peradventure he may lend me his hand, and raise me up with hope of heaven; others have gone to him, and he hath bid them welcome. Oh the rings and robes, the kisses and embraces, which many returning prodigals have had of him! Who knoweth but he may be gracious to me? If he had not been willing that poor sinners should live, he would not have died; if he had been unwilling that I should come, why doth he call me? Well, whatever come of it, I will go; it may be I may be hid in the day of the Lord's wrath. Thus faith at first standeth but on one weak foot.

I suppose that when the sinner is in this condition the very command of God, enjoining him to believe in the name of his Son, is a special instrument in the hand of the Spirit to draw him unto Christ. Like Abraham, he being called of God, obeyed, not knowing whither he went; he being called of God to cast himself on Jesus Christ, obeyeth, not knowing how he shall speed.

The disciples, when they hear Christ speaking to them in the morning, 'Cast on the other side of the ship and ye shall find,' answer him, 'We have fished all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at thy command we will let down the net.' So the penitent man having tried this and that means, and found no water, no meat, no solid food for his hungry and thirsty soul, heareth at last Christ calling to him, 'Ho every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Cast thy sins, thy soul, on me, and thou shalt find rest. Lord, thinks he, I have tried creatures, and they cannot help me; I have tried duties, and they cannot ease me; I have taken much pains, and caught nothing; and should I come to thee, wouldst thou open thine eye upon such a wretch? My unworthiness makes me mis-

trust the success; nevertheless at thy command I will do it. And now he cometh in his sinking estate to take hold on the arm of the Lord which the gospel stretcheth out to him, and thereby he is saved.

The last step is a resolution of the sinner to give up himself to all the laws of Christ, or a hearty acceptation of the Redeemer as Saviour and sovereign. The heart of the man is so melted by evangelical sorrow for sin, and the heat of God's love to his soul, that he is like soft wax for any impression; God may command him what he pleaseth; he cleaveth to the law with full purpose of heart. Before, he was like the prodigal, he must go as far as he could from his Father's house; the orders there were too pure, the laws there too strict, the discipline there too severe; he travelleth therefore into a far country. But now the man is hungry; he will submit to the duty of a son, so he may but have the children's bread and diet. Nay, now he is come to himself; it is his meat and drink to do the will of God: he seeth such equity in God's will, such beauty in his worship, such excellency and comfort in his ways, that he would not part Jesus Christ and his holy precepts, which he now savoureth, for all earthly pleasures: he is tied so firmly to his master with the bond of unfeigned love, that Satan himself will but work at the labour-in-vain when he goeth about to separate him and his service.

He writes holiness to the Lord upon his body, soul, estate, family, relations, and all that he hath, thankfully acknowledging God's propriety in all, and his own felicity to consist in improving all for God. He considereth how infinite his obligations to God are, what a hell of endless horror he is redeemed from, what a heaven of love and happiness he is called to, and wisheth that he had or could do something worthy of such a God. And because he hath nothing more or better, he gives himself to God: as Æschines, when he saw his fellow-scholars give their master, Socrates, large presents, being poor, and having nothing to give, went and gave himself to his master, acknowledging that he was his devoted servant.

The sinner before was unbroken, and so as unfit for subjection as the unbroken colt for the saddle; but now the heart being humbled, the ear is heedy to whatever God speaketh, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts ix. 6.

It is with a humbled and unhumbled sinner as with two men that are going to market, whereof the one hath need, he and his family are in extreme want, ready to perish for bread.[1] Now this

[1] M. Fenner, of the killing power of the law.

man will go, whatever weather come; if it rain never so fast, he will go; when he comes there, whatever the price be, he will buy; though he pawn his clothes he will have bread. Why? he is like to famish for want of it; bread he comes for, and bread he must have. The other hath no great need; therefore, if he like the weather, he will go; if not, he will stay at home: if he goeth, when he comes to the market he will buy or forbear as the price of things pleaseth him; he is indifferent whether he lay out his money or no; if commodities are held at a high rate, he will go as he came, and buy nothing; and all because he hath no need, he can do well enough without them. Thus a humbled sinner seeth, nay, feeleth his extreme need of Christ, that he must perish everlastingly without an interest in him; and therefore, whatever it cost him, he will have Christ: he is resolved to deny himself, to crucify the flesh, to hate father, mother, house, name, land, all for Christ. Let God hold the price of his Son never so dear, he will sell all, but he will buy this pearl. And what is the reason? Truly because this man hath need; he knoweth the absolute necessity which he standeth in of Christ; that none but Christ can deliver him from the weight of his sins, the Almighty God's fury, and the vengeance of eternal fire; therefore he comes for, and a Saviour he will have, whatever commands or prohibitions are joined with him. But an unhumbled sinner seeth not his extreme need of Christ; and therefore, though when he heareth of the infinite perfections in Christ, and the unspeakable privileges which the regenerate have by Christ, he will acknowledge that the wares are good, he hath nothing to say against them, but the price is too dear, he will not come up to it. And why? Truly because he seeth not his need of Christ; he thinks he can do well enough without Christ. If God would let him serve Christ, and the world and flesh with him, he would not care much if he did buy; but if he cannot have Christ at his own price, farewell Christ, and pardon, and mercy, and God, and eternal life, farewell for ever for him, and all because the man is a whole man, unbroken, unhumbled. But you have read in the former steps that the sinner, before he comes thus far, is thoroughly melted, and therefore he is for any mould which God thinks good, Mat. ix. 12.

Yet I believe that a man or woman, whom the Spirit of God hath brought over to Jesus Christ, doth by the new nature bestowed on them, or the law of God written within them, resolve upon all known duties, and against all known iniquities, more out of love to God and holiness, than out of any slavish fear of

wrath and hell. The man seeth by the law the contrariety of sin to the image of God, and consequently to his own real and spiritual good, whereby there ariseth within him not only an estrangedness from, but an enmity against, sin; though it were the object of his affections before, yet it is the object of his passions now. So for duties, the soul is brought, through working of the Spirit, to approve and delight in the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. Communion with God, and conformity to God, are the utmost of his desires and endeavours. Oh, how willingly doth this Christian take upon him the yoke of Christ, not complaining of its uneasiness, but of his own unholiness!

The man formerly was as a virgin: before marriage she standeth upon her terms, she will indent with her sweetheart what shall be settled upon her, and how he shall deal with her, or else she will not have him; but now Christ by his Spirit hath prevailed with the soul, and it is heartily willing to take him for better for worse, to resign up all to Christ, to part with all for Christ, to take all from Christ, to be disposed in all by Christ; in a word, it promiseth with the whole heart to be a loving, faithful, and obedient wife; and now the match is made, nay, the Saviour and the soul are actually married together, and oh what a happy, joyful day is this! If Aaron, when he met Moses, was glad at his heart, how glad is this poor soul now he meets with the Messias! The Father accepts him for his child, the Son accepts him for his spouse, the Spirit hath given earnest already to have the Christian's heart for his everlasting habitation; the devils in hell are vexing, the angels in heaven are singing, the saints on earth are shouting, for it is meet that they should be merry, for this son was dead, and is alive, was lost, and is found, was a cursed sinner, and is become a blessed saint.

So I have despatched the first branch of this second help to regeneration, namely, an observation of those several steps whereby the wandering sheep is brought home. I come now to the second branch of this help, which is a pliable submission to the workings and motions of the Spirit, when the Spirit at any time maketh his addresses to thy soul.

Reader, I must earnestly beseech thee, if thou hast the least spark of love to thy soul, and endless good in the other world, that thou be more tender of the motions of the Spirit than of the apple of thine eye. When the Holy Ghost cometh to thy soul by its motions to good, thy kind entertainment of it may be as much as thine eternal happiness is worth, and probably invite the Spirit to

stay with thee, perfect the work, and abide in thee for ever; whereas if thou shouldst grieve or quench the Spirit, and affront this ambassador which is sent to treat with thee about terms of peace between God and thy soul, he may be called home, and thou never hear of him more.

We read in Gen. i. 2 that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Several read the words, The Spirit of God was sitting or hatching upon the waters.[1] It is a metaphor taken from birds or hens; they sit and move upon their eggs to hatch them, and bring them forth, and when they are hatched, they still sit and move upon them to cherish and bring them to perfection. So the Spirit of God sat or moved upon that face of the deep, that by his motion or incubation he might hatch and bring forth out of that vast chaos the several kinds of creatures. Thus the Spirit moveth upon thy heart, he sitteth upon, he broodeth on thee, that he may hatch and bring thee forth a new creature. Therefore consider what thou dost, and how thou carriest thyself towards him. Fowls, when they have been much disturbed, have left their eggs and never hatched them, they have come to nothing; should thou resist the Spirit in his operations, or quench him in his motions when he is brooding on thy soul, he may take his eternal flight from thee.

When the Spirit cometh to thy soul by its motions, dissuading thee from sin, or stirring thee up to holiness, Jesus Christ then knocks at the door of thy heart; every motion is a knock from the hand of Christ; if thou hearkenest and openest, he will come in and sup with thee; but if, notwithstanding his knocking, thou wilt not hear, though he cometh upon an errand so infinitely for thine advantage, he will depart away in a distaste, as neighbours when they are so uncivilly used, and thou mayest never hear of him more.

Thou art apt to complain that thou wantest help to turn from sin, and to turn unto God. I tell thee, when the Spirit moveth and worketh within thee to mind thy soul and thine eternal estate, he offereth thee his help and assistance, and if thou hearkenest to, and obeyest his motions, thou shalt have his help. As he was teaching, the power of God was present to heal them, Luke v. 17. Whilst the Son of man was teaching, at that nick of time the power of God was present to heal men's bodies. So when the Spirit is moving, at that very time the power of God is present to help thy soul: now, if thou takest that time, thou mayest be a happy man for ever. If when the winds blow fairly for men's

[1] Incubabat aquis.—*Jun. Gen.*

voyage, they then hoist up their sails and be going, they may, through the help of the wind, be at their haven in convenient time; but if they neglect the opportunity, and will not launch out while the wind offereth its help, they may be dead before they have another wind, and so never go that voyage. Thus if when the gales of the Spirit blow, and offer thee their assistance for regeneration and salvation, thou then presently launchest out, and compliest with its motions, through its help thou shouldst be seasonably and safely landed in Christ, and at the haven of heaven; but if thou then liest still and neglectest this opportunity, God knoweth but thou mayest be dead before the Spirit blow so favourably for thee again.

Solomon telleth us that there is a time for every purpose under heaven, and a time to be born, Eccles. iii. 1, 2. There is time for every purpose, that is, an opportunity when the work may be done best, and with most advantage; yea, when it must be done, or shall not be done at all. Now such a time, such an opportunity there is for the new birth; there is an accepted time, a time when God may be found, when he is near, a day of salvation, 2 Cor. vii. 2; Ps. xxx. 6, and lv. 6. This is when the Spirit moveth and stirreth, and offereth thee his help; if thou passest by that time, and dost not then strike in, thou mayest come, as Esau, too late for the blessing; thou mayest, as some idle persons that are tippling and drinking in an ale-house when they should be in the market, let slip thy opportunity, and find it too late to buy the wine and milk in the gospel.

It is one great misery of men and women that they observe not, neither improve their opportunities. The turtle, and the stork, and the crane, and the swallow, they all know their opportunity and their time, Jer. viii. 7; but the generation of mankind neglect theirs. 'Oh that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things which concern thy peace'! Opportunity is a transient thing, it is quickly gone, but it bringeth a lasting treasure along with it, which if neglected can never be recovered. Time is all the while a man liveth on the earth; but opportunity is only when the Spirit moveth: 'Me ye have not always,' saith Christ.

Friend, thou wilt make hay while the sun shineth; I mean improve opportunities for the good of thine outward estate; when the heavens offer thee their help, then thou wilt cut thy corn or hay, make it, and carry it in. For thy soul's sake do not neglect the Spirit, when he offereth thee his help for a spiritual harvest; when the Holy Ghost moveth, like the angel upon the

waters, then at that nick of time, if thou steppest down, art pliable to its motions, thou mayest be healed.

The Spirit of God is a tender thing, saith one; grieve it once and you may drive it away for ever: 'Grieve not the Spirit,' Eph. iv. 30, much less quench it, least of all resist it. Masters of a calling will not be checked, 1 Thes. v. 19; Acts vii. 51.

The client, by losing a term, hath lost his suit; Saul, by losing his opportunity, lost a kingdom, 1 Sam. x. 9, 13. Reader, the way to lose the kingdom of heaven is to neglect and slight the motions of the Spirit, the only opportunity for thy salvation.

For thine help herein I shall direct thee how to demean thyself towards the Spirit when he maketh his addresses unto thy soul for thy regeneration and quickening; in which I shall take thee, as indeed thou art in thine unregenerate estate, for a patient dangerously sick, yea, unto death eternal, though thou thinkest thyself whole, and the Spirit of God, as he is, for a skilful, able, and compassionate physician.

First, I suppose that this tender physician, beholding thee very sick, notwithstanding thy conceit that thou art well enough, and daily increasing thy distemper, doth come to thee and acquaint thee that thou art a diseased person, and that unless thou forbearest such and such sins, such and such things, which feed thy disease, thou wilt make thy condition, which is already dangerous, to be desperate and incurable. I mean the Holy Ghost enlighteneth thy mind to see, and convinceth thy conscience of thy sins and misery, that whereas before thou thoughtest that thou wast rich, and increased with goods, and hadst need of nothing, Rev. iii. 11, yet now thou seest that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and that such and such courses which thou takest will unavoidably tend to thy ruin. Possibly thou art one accustomed to wicked company, to the ale-house, to deal unrighteously in thy particular calling, to lay aside praying, hearing, reading, and the like duties. Now the Spirit of God in thy conscience moveth thee to lay down these ungodly customs which thou hast taken up, and to take up these duties and performances which thou hast laid down, and convinceth thee by the word that this is the will of God. Oh now, friend, look to thyself, that thou dost not sin against this light, nor play by that candle which the Spirit of God sets up for thee to work by! If thou hadst a guest of any quality in thine house, and shouldst burn things of an ill savour in his chamber, which thou knewest he hated, or shouldst fill the room wherein he lodgeth with filth and uncleanness, wouldst thou

not provoke him to speed away in a distaste, and to resolve against ever coming at thine house again! I must tell thee that shouldst thou go on in the commission of those iniquities, and neglect of those duties, which the Spirit convinceth thee of, it would be far more distasteful to the Spirit of God, than all the forementioned uncivil usage could be to an emperor. The Holy Ghost is compared to fire, Acts ii., as the word *quenching* implieth. Now, how is fire quenched and put out? both by throwing water on it, and by taking away the wood from it. Shouldst thou, notwithstanding its checks and convictions, continue in any way of open wickedness, thou throwest water upon it; and shouldst thou omit those holy duties, thou withdrawest fuel from it; and therefore be confident the fire will be quenched and go out.

By sinning against these convictions and light thou art a professed defier and darer of him, and mayest confidently expect that he should give thee up to judiciary inward darkness, which is but the forerunner of utter darkness, Rom. i. 20–22; James iii. 18; Prov. v. 11–13; John ix. 41.

If thou improvest that little stock of help, which the Holy Ghost affordeth thee, well, thou may hope that thy master will trust thee with more. Every act of obedience fitteth for greater obedience. But if thou squanderest that away prodigally by sinning against it, thou mayest look for no more.

Dear friend, be tender of the first motions of the Spirit. Thou sittest cold and frozen in thy natural estate. Now, as ever thou wouldst have a good fire to melt thee kindly, to thaw thee thoroughly, to warm thy heart eternally, make much of those sparks. As thou desirest a spiritual flame, which may ascend to heaven, take heed lest, by presumptuous sins, thou blowest out those sparks. As the best way to quench the fiery darts of the devil, that evil spirit, is to reject them, to disobey them in the first motions, when the devil first kindleth them, then throw water on them, then detest them, and that fire of hell will be quenched; so the readiest way to quench the fiery darts of the good Spirit is to slight the first motions of it. If thou strive against these first motions of him, he may never strive with thee more, Gen. vi. 3.

It may be thou art a drunken wretch, an unclean person, a scoffer at godliness, a swearer, a liar, a cheater by false weights, or measures, or the like, and the Spirit of God whispereth thee in the ear, Man, dost thou know what thou dost? thou art in a lost estate, in a damnable condition. Turn at my reproof, saith God, and I will pour my Spirit upon thee, Prov. i. 24. Forbear such sins, and

I will assist thee for the recovery of thy soul. Oh now look to thyself, venture by no means upon the forbidden fruit. I have read of one, that being troubled with sore eyes, asked a physician's advice. The physician told him, that if he did not forbear his drunken, intemperate courses, he would lose his sight. He makes no more of it, but presently crieth out, Farewell sweet sight, farewell sweet sight.[1] He was resolved to lose his sight rather than leave his sin. Thou art diseased, the tender physician cometh to thee without sending for, and giveth thee his blessed counsel without asking, and it is this, that thou must forbear thy lewd, sinful ways, or else thou wilt lose thy soul, thy Saviour, thy God, thine happiness for ever. Now, wilt thou, by continuing in such courses, and rejecting his first counsel, say, Farewell precious soul, farewell dearest Saviour, farewell blessed God, farewell glorious angels, farewell perfect spirits, farewell fulness of joy, rivers of pleasures, farewell to you all, ay, and farewell for ever. Take heed what thou dost with these first motions of the Spirit, lest he take of thee his last leave, and bid thee farewell for ever.

When a noble person should come to thine house, one by whom thou expectest to be promoted highly and enriched greatly, or one whose heir thou lookest to be, how welcome wouldst thou make such a man, especially the first time that he cometh to visit thee! and upon those very accounts, I mean for thy advantage, he must have the best room, the best fare, the most pleasing language, the most respectful carriage; all things must be done, as much as possibly can be, according to his mind, and nothing must be done which is known to be offensive to him; and all, lest he should be provoked to forsake thee, to cast thee off, and to do nothing at all for thee. Reader, is there not far more reason that when the infinite Spirit of the blessed God cometh to thine heart, who only is able to promote thee to become the child of God, an heir of heaven, and to enrich thee with the image of God in regeneration; that when he cometh first to thee, and for these very ends, thou shouldst give him all the respects imaginable, that thou shouldst follow his counsel, forbear what thou knowest grieves him, do what thou knowest will please him, lest he depart away from thee, and do none of these things for thee? Saul, by disobeying the counsel of Samuel from God, concerning the slaughter of the Amalekites, did so grieve his Spirit, that Samuel tells him plainly, that God had rejected him from being king. And the text saith expressly, that 'Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death,' (that

[1] Vale lumen amicum.

is, never,) 'nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul.' Truly now the Spirit of God delivereth thee counsel, to destroy those notorious sins, which if thou wilt, thou canst forbear; shouldst thou spare those fat, those king-corruptions, though the Spirit of God may mourn for thee, that thou shouldst be such a wilful soul-murderer, and reject the counsel of God against thyself, yet he may utterly reject thee from being any of the heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and thou mayest see him no more to the day of thy death.

If thou livest under the gospel, I question not but the Holy Spirit doth move thee to forsake thine ungodly comrades, thy scandalous crimes, and to set upon prayer in secret, in private, Scripture and meditation, which I must tell thee that if thou hast will at home, as we say, thou hast power enough in thine hands to do; again and again I pray thee to cherish and obey such motions, (the Spirit makes short work with some,) lest he bid thee adieu, and clap such a curse upon thee, that thou never clawest off while thou livest, no, not whilst thou hast a being.

It may be this skilful physician proceedeth further; he doth not only shew thee thy disease, and tell thee what things are bad, what things are good for it, but also gives thee physic, in order to thy cure, and such physic as works to purpose, and makes thee heart-sick indeed. I mean, the Spirit of God proceedeth from illumination to humiliation; it doth not only convince thee of thy wounds and putrified sores, but also lanceth and cutteth them, applieth a stinging corrosive to eat up thy proud flesh, and putteth thee to great pain; the Spirit sheweth thee sin and wrath in their colours, making thee see the former more frightful than a devil, and feel the latter more painful at thy heart than a dagger; possibly he takes thee and holds thee, as it were, over hell, making thee see the smoke of that bottomless pit, smell the brimstone, and feel the scorchings of that eternal fire, that thou beginnest to sink under the weight of thy wickedness, and to cry out, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head, and they are a burden too heavy for me to bear,' Ps. xxxviii. 4. Those sins which were as sweet as honey in thy mouth, are now taken down into thy belly, and they are there more bitter than gall. The law chargeth thee home with its great guns, that thou fearest and tremblest, and knowest not whither to fly for succour.

If thou art come thus much of thy journey, I would bid thee welcome so far, and would tell thee, for thy encouragement, that these pangs and throes seem to foretell the new birth to be coming. If thou sufferest not the devil and thy corrupt heart to be at thy

labour, to try their experiments, and tamper about thee, for questionless they would destroy both thee and the babe of grace in thy womb, but sufferest the Spirit of God to be thy midwife, and followest his directions, I durst be the man that should prophesy a happy and safe delivery. But thou knowest that the condition of one in travail is very ticklish; a little miscarriage may then undo both mother and child; therefore it behoveth thee now to be extraordinary careful what thou dost, and how thou carriest thyself; it is as much as thy life is worth. For thy direction I shall tell thee what thou shouldst not do, and what thou shouldst do.

Be sure that thou do not run to creatures for comfort. Foolish people, when sometimes an able chirurgeon hath laid some sharp medicine to their festered wounds, which puts them to much pain, though, unless by such means the rottenness of them be eaten up, and the corruption in them forced out, they can never be cured, yet they are ordinarily so impatient, that they will not endure it, but ask this good woman, and that neighbour, if they do not know a milder medicine for such a sore. Surely, say they, this medicine which the doctor useth will never do it; we find the member or part very angry, and extremely raging. And then some one or other acquainteth them with gentler means, which they presently apply, and thereby skin over their sores before they are half searched, that afterwards the wound either breaks out again, and puts them to more pain if ever they be healed, or else keeps still in, overspreads the body, and kills them. Thus do too many with the physician of their souls, and thereby do often undo themselves. The Spirit of God applieth the terrors and consternations of the law, to make way and prepare them for the dainties and consolations of the gospel; the good Samaritan poureth wine into the wound to search it, before he poureth oil to heal it. Now foolish men are impatient, not able to bear such sad, melancholy thoughts, as they call them, and therefore they often break away from the Spirit of God before they are thoroughly humbled, and run to their earthly enjoyments, whereby they get some present ease, but here or hereafter far greater pain.

It is reported of the Italians, that in a great thunder they ring their bells, and shoot off their cannons, that the noise of them might drown the voice of the thunder. Thus do some with the voice of their awakened and terrified consciences, they seek to drown it by the noise of worldly businesses, recreations, or it may be ungodly delights; but surely damning a soul is not the way to save a soul.

Reader, didst thou never know of any that were in a journey, and coming to some deep, dirty, potchy lane, they thought to avoid it, and broke over the hedge into the field? but when they had rode round and round, they could find no way out, but were forced to go out where they got in; and then, notwithstanding their unwillingness, to go through that miry lane, or else not go that journey. Truly so it is in thy journey to heaven; thou art now come to this deep lane of humiliation, through which all must go that will reach that city, 'whose builder and maker is God.' Do not think to avoid it, no, not the least part of it; for this is the narrow way and strait gate that leadeth to life. Suppose thou shouldst run to the world, or anything here below, now thou beginnest to be sensible of thy sickness and pain, and so in a hopeful way of recovery; first, It is impossible that any of those things can cure thee, —miserable comforters are they all, and physicians of no value. Can a silver slipper cure the gout? or a golden crown the headache? or the greatest empire in the world the pain of the teeth? Much less can these things cure the diseases of thy soul. All the wrapping of thy foot, that hath a thorn in it, though with never so much fine scarlet cloth, will be altogether ineffectual to ease thee of thy pain, for the thorn must be pulled out; so must sin be plucked out, its guilt removed, before thou canst possibly be eased. But my great reason is, which I desire thee to consider seriously, shouldst thou throw off this medicine of thy spiritual physician because it is somewhat sharp, and run to the empirics and mountebanks of the world, thou wilt provoke thy tender, able physician to leave thee; (for what man will bear such affronts?) and where art thou then? what will become of thee for ever? Those that work in coal mines find by experience that the earth sendeth up damps which quench and put out their candles; and what then becomes of the men that are there? they are often slain. Shouldst thou, like Jonah, run from the presence of the Lord, to more pleasing employments than the work of a thorough humiliation, he will bring thee back again to the same business, either by storms and tempests, or else such damps will arise from thine earthly interruptions, as will quench God's Spirit, and eternally ruin thy spirit.

The evil spirit, I know, will be busy to persuade thee to smother and put out the sparks which the good Spirit hath kindled within thee, by heaps of worldly rubbish and dirt; but take heed what thou dost, for thy soul is at stake. If those sparks should die, thou art like to live in hell-fire for ever. Observe how it fared with un-

happy Felix. He was a prisoner to his prisoner, and in a ready way to have been one of Christ's freemen, but now hell's jailer was like to lose one of his captives, for I question not but Satan, for fear of losing him, trembled more than he; what, therefore, through the devil's advice must Felix do? He must needs cure himself of his convulsion by an abrupt diversion. When the Spirit struck in with the word, and caused him to tremble, he sendeth Paul away till another season, and we never read when that time came. Had Felix struck in with the Spirit, when the iron of his heart was hot, he might have been happy indeed; but he quencheth those motions which were so likely to recover his soul, and thereby, in all probability, misseth salvation.

Some say that Samson's mother was forbidden wine and strong drink all the while she was with child of him, partly because that wine and strong drink are naught for the child in the womb. I am confident that carnal diversions, that to put back thy pangs by earthly affairs, much more by wine and strong drink, is infinitely prejudicial to the babe of grace, and many to one but it may cause thine eternal miscarriage.

Friend, that which in this case I would advise thee to do, is to betake thyself to thy closet, or chamber, and there to fall down before the most high God, and to accuse, indict, and condemn thyself for thy sins; pour out thy soul before the Lord in acknowledging the pollutions of thy nature, the transgressions of thy life, with all their bloody aggravations, confessing the righteousness of the law, and thy obnoxiousness thereby to the infinite and eternal wrath of the Lord. Oh now is the time to repent, with that repentance which is never to be repented of; if ever thou wouldst draw water, and pour it out before the Lord, it must be now the Spirit hath thawed the tap; neglect this season, and it may freeze again speedily. When Nathan came from God to David after his fall, when he had lain in his impenitency many months, and told him of his sins, and convinced him that he was worthy to die, what doth David do? doth he run to his crown, or honour, or power in the world? No. Doth he hastily snatch at the promises? No; but he goeth to God, as appears by the title and body of the 51st Psalm, bewaileth his original and actual sins, condemneth himself, justifieth God, offereth up the sacrifice of a broken heart, beggeth hard for pardon and holiness. Oh do thou follow this blessed pattern! If thy body were sick of a violent fever, and nature were so far thy friend, as when thou wast in thy bed to put thee into a fine sweat, and thereby give thee hope of evacuating the ill-humours,

which cause thy disease, through the pores, what wouldst thou do in this case? Wouldst thou rise presently, and run into the cold air? or wouldst thou not rather abide still in thy bed, and, if need were, call for more clothes to increase thy sweat, whereby thy body might be perfectly cured? Thus it is in the state of thy soul: thou art sick unto death; the Spirit of God is so much thy friend as to help thee to sweat out thy distemper by humiliation and godly sorrow; it were a madness in thee now to run to the open air of the world, or to do anything which might hinder this sweating; thy only way is to encourage and increase it, by betaking thyself to thy chamber, and there to look into thy heart, and consider how full it is of unholiness; to look back upon thy life, and consider how contrary it hath been to the divine law; to look up to God, and consider the majesty, holiness, and mercy, which are in him whom thou hast provoked; this is the way to continue and increase thy humiliation, and thereby (for the Spirit delighteth to proceed in assisting those that thus cherish his motions) to be perfectly healed. Duties now are the Spirit's pleasant garden, in which he will delight to walk with thee; they are like bellows to blow up the heavenly fire into a flame, or as oil to the lamps, which will keep them ever burning. Philosophers tell us, that elementary fire wants no fuel, though culinary doth. Divines tell us, that the Spirit of God needs not ordinances, for he is infinite in power; but that he will not work without them, where he affords them, is manifestly his pleasure.

Reader, if thou art humbled, as I have before spoken, thou lookest on thyself as a vile creature, even as a dog; I would have thee now very careful, that thou wait patiently, for the bountiful housekeeper of the world is preparing some good food for thee, and do not catch too hastily at the children's bread, the promises, lest it be taken from thee, and thou meet with a blow. When a wound is deep, there is much wisdom required to keep it some time open with a tent, and not to heal it up too soon, lest its cure be imperfect. Do thou wait God's leisure, bemoaning thy sins, abhorring thyself, praying fervently for thy soul; and be confident that Jesus Christ, who is already upon his way, will arise upon thee speedily, with healing under his wings.

It may be that this tender, able physician cometh nearer to thee; he doth not only shew thee the nature and danger of thy disease, and make thee, who were before senseless, apprehensive of it by feeling thy sickness, but doth also discover to thee an excellent and costly remedy, which hath cured many of thy very disease, and will un-

questionably heal thee, if thou wilt but accept it thankfully, and apply it prudently; I mean the Spirit presenteth to thee, when thou art full of anguish and sorrow, that rare salve of the blood of Jesus Christ, which, spread upon a promise, is the only healing plaster for a wounded conscience. He acquainteth thee with the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ to save sinners; that he is a Saviour of God's own appointing, one in whom God hath given under his hand that he is well pleased; a Redeemer that hath in him infinite meritoriousness, because he is the only begotten of the Father. He sheweth thee long bills of others' debts which have been cancelled by the blood of Christ, and assureth thee that he is not only able, but truly willing, to save thee; that he was wounded for thy transgressions, and bruised for thine iniquities, and by his stripes thou mayest be healed. The Holy Ghost possibly setteth the King of saints before thee in all his robes, and riches, and righteousness, as it were, thus bespeaking thee: Come poor sinner that liest weltering in thy blood, hearken to me, and thou shalt see what I can, and will do for thee; though by thy wilful breach of the law thou art liable to such endless, boundless fury as thou couldst neither abide nor avoid, yet I will be a screen between thee and the unquenchable fire. I will satisfy the law, and pacify my Father; I will not only deliver thee from sin and Satan, wrath, and death, and damnation, but adopt thee for a son, interest thee in that inestimable treasure, the covenant of grace, and make thee an heir of the eternal weight of glory; and all this thou shalt have freely and surely, if thou wilt but accept me thankfully and heartily for thy Saviour and Lord; at the hearing of which loving language thou probably art amazed, and ready to say, as Mephibosheth, when David told him that he should eat bread at his table continually, 'What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?' Thou admirest the freeness of his mercy, and the happiness of his members; thy soul begins to be exceedingly in love with him, and affectionately longing after him; Oh, thinkest thou, had I but Christ for my portion, though I were never so poor in temporals, I could be heartily contented! Now, Christian, the kingdom of God is come nigh unto thee; thou art now upon thy quickening, be but careful here and thou art made for ever. I know that thy broken heart is willing to go to Jesus Christ, but have a care that thou carry nothing to him, that thou keep nothing from him; thy miscarriage in either of these may quite break off the bargain betwixt Christ and thy soul, as near as it is driven.

I say, carry nothing to Christ. Thy next step must be quite out of thine own doors. The devil knoweth how to slay thee as well

by thy righteousness, thy mournful contrition for sin, as by thine unrighteousness, thy wilful commission of sin; which made Augustine say, that repentance damneth more than sin; nay, thy trusting upon thy prayers, or tears, or any good in thee, doth alter the nature of them, and turn them into sin. In this many stick; they are hardly brought off from their own bottoms. When men's houses are on fire, their covetousness to save their goods hath often lost them their lives; when men's souls are in a flame, their pride to carry out with them their good prayers, and good desires, and good resolutions, hath lost them eternal life: they will pay some of their brass farthings towards the reckoning, and God therefore makes them pay the whole shot.

Oh how unwilling is the creature to be beholden to Christ, his surety, for the payment of all his debts! Though he be a mere bankrupt, yet he hopes he may compound with his creditor, and pay something towards his satisfaction; and this ariseth partly from his ignorance of that righteousness which alone can satisfy the law, or pacify the Lord: 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness,' Rom. x. 3. They were ignorant, first, how perfect that righteousness must be for which God will justify a sinner; and if there be the least spot in it, his pure eyes cannot accept it. Secondly, They were ignorant how complete that righteousness is which the law requireth; how the law reacheth to the inward as well as the outward man; how it damneth for the smallest idle word, wandering thought, or complying motion of the heart with sin. Did they but know that the righteousness which pleaseth God for their justification must answer the law in its full latitude and all its dimensions, they would not offer their drossy duties, no, nor their golden graces, for current coin, which being weighed in that balance of the sanctuary, must needs be found infinitely too light. Partly from his pride: 'For they, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 3. Mark, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. Proud man esteems it submission, a condescension, to be beholden to Jesus Christ for remission and salvation; he hath, though a beggar's purse, yet a proud heart, and is loath to trouble Jesus Christ so much, and to take all his mercies as alms out of the basket of the Redeemer's merits.

Reader, now thou art in a storm, if thou lovest thy soul do not run to shelter thyself under the rotten house of thy own righteousness, for be confident it will fall about thine ears, and thou, like

Zimri, will perish in it. The law of man denieth allowance from the parish to them that have anything of their own to subsist by; and the gospel of God denieth allowance from the righteousness of Christ to all them that have of their own for their maintenance.

Do not think to piece thy rags up with Christ's robes, for it will not be allowed; go to Jesus Christ stark naked for his glorious raiment, altogether poor for his precious riches; there is a necessity of being found wholly in him, or wholly out of him; there is no medium. The hare which, being pursued, trusteth to her own legs, is torn in pieces by the dogs; when the coney, that runneth to the holes of the rock, is safe. The man that, pursued by the law, leaneth on his own sanctity, loseth his own soul, when he that fleeth to the wounds of a crucified Christ is sure to be saved. 'Behold, saith God, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth on him shall not be confounded,' Isa. xxviii. 16; 1. Pet. ii. 6.

As I would have thee careful that thou carry nothing to Christ, so also that thou keep nothing from Christ. When Israel went out of Egypt to serve God, there was not a hoof to be left behind. There must be no reservation, no exception, but an absolute hearty dedication of thyself, and all thou hast, unto Jesus Christ; if thou halvest or haltest now, thou art an undone man. As Samuel asked Jesse, Are all thy sons here? and denied to sit down and feast with him till all were present; so truly Christ will deny to close with thy soul, to sit down and sup with thee, unless all thou hast be present, and unfeignedly devoted to his service.

But in a special manner be careful that no sin be kept from the stroke of Christ. As when Paul came to Ephesus the whole city was in an uproar, so now the Lord Jesus is coming into thine heart, there will be old stir among thy corruptions; how strongly will they plead, if not for their former open allowance, yet at least for a secret inward connivance! Little dost thou think how busy Satan will be for a writ of partition, that since he cannot prevail for all thy heart, that yet he may be admitted an equal sharer with Christ: he will tell thee, but remember that he was a liar from the beginning, that thou mayest keep thy sins and thy Saviour too; that Christ is not so strict, but that for a fair agreement he will allow somewhat to the flesh. But I beseech thee not to think of any league with the least of thy lusts. Surely if thou seest any loveliness in Christ, thou canst not but judge every sin loathsome; besides, he were a poor Saviour if he could not make thee amends for thy parting with the most pleasurable or profitable sin. Who

would think that thou, like David, shouldst plead for Absalom, for sin, when it seeks to bereave thee of thy crown and life? Truly shouldst thou gratify Satan so far as to hide any wedge of gold or Babylonish garment, any one lust, I must tell thee that one, be it never so small, would, like a little boy put in at a casement, open the door of thine heart for many thievish lusts, and great ones too, to enter in. If thou allow the old serpent but room for his head, he will quickly wind in his whole body. Sir Francis Drake, being in a dangerous storm upon the Thames, was heard to say, Must I, who have escaped the rage of the ocean, be drowned in a ditch? Surely thou mayest so far comply with Christ as to take thy leave of scandalous enormities; yet if thou reservest favourable thoughts towards any secret iniquity, thou destroyest thyself. And it will be all one whether thou art slain by a small pistol or by a great cannon.

Corruption may close with religion a great way, saith a divine,[1] and hear gladly and do many things; but there is a particular point of strictness in every unregenerate man's case, which, when it is set on close to him, causeth him to be offended and stumble, as in the young man and Herod. This is the difference between hypocritical and sincere conversion: that goeth far, and parts with much, and proceeds to *almost;* but when it comes to the turning-point, and ultimate act of regeneration, he then plays the part of an unwise son, and stays in the place of the breaking forth of children, as a foolish merchant, that in a rich bargain of a thousand pound breaks off upon a difference of twenty shillings; but the other is content to part with all, and to suffer the loss of all, to carry on the treaty to a full and final conclusion, to have all the armour of the strong man taken from him, that Christ may divide the spoils.

Reader, thou knowest upon what terms thou mayest contract a bargain with Christ for the saving of thy soul; that thou must not think to have him for thy Saviour, unless thou wilt accept him for thy Lord also. As Boaz told his kinsman, that if he would enjoy the inheritance of Abimelech, he must have Ruth the Moabitess to be his wife; so say I to thee, if thou wilt have the inheritance, the portion of Jesus Christ, thou must have his person for thy husband, and resign thyself to be ruled by his precepts. The Jews that stayed themselves upon the God of Israel, and yet continued rebellious, were more bold than welcome, Isa. xlviii. 1, 2. Now thou art come thus far, do not go back, and to save a pin, lose a kingdom. Thou mayest

[1] Dr Reynolds on Hosea xiv. Ser. 7.

be confident, that nothing can ever be enjoined thee by Christ but what is reasonable and honourable, tending to thy real and eternal good, as well as his own glory; therefore now the master is come and calleth for thee, do thou answer, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God; thy law is in the midst of my heart.'

Friend, if the Spirit of God hath been so favourable to thee, as to kindle such motions as I have mentioned within thee, for the Lord's sake cherish them, obey them, lest thy quenching the Spirit bring thee to that fire which can never be quenched. 'To-day if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thine heart, lest he swear in his wrath that thou shalt never enter into his rest.'

The third help to regeneration.

A serious constant use of all the means of grace which God hath appointed for the renewing of souls, with an expectation of a blessing from God.

Thirdly, If thou wouldst be regenerated, be serious and constant in the use of all the means of grace which God hath appointed for the begetting souls unto Christ, with looking unto God for a blessing.

Reader, observe five particulars in this third help to regeneration.

First, Use and attend on the means of grace. The ordinances of God are the marts and fairs whereat Christians must trade for grace. At them thou mayest buy spiritual commodities without money, and without price. The ever blessed God hath upon a twofold account enjoined the use of his ordinances: partly out of sovereignty over us, that we might thereby acknowledge that homage and fealty which we owe to his majesty; partly out of mercy to us, that we might therein receive of his Spirit and grace. By our attendance on ordinances, as by a pepper-corn, for all that we can do is very little, we acknowledge of whom we hold, and to whom we are bound; and also they are the door at which God giveth his gracious doles. The manna of the Spirit doth usually fall down in the dews of ordinances. Thou hast God's command for thy warrant, Mat. vii. 7, 8; Isa. lv. 1–5; and his promise for thy motive, 'In all places where I record my name, there I will come, and will bless thee,' Exod. xx. 24. And if thou wouldst know what blessing, what alms, God giveth at those places, 'There the Lord commandeth his blessing, even life for evermore,' Ps. cxxxiii. 3. God giveth not such blessings anywhere as there; there are the mercies of the throne—pardon, love, peace, conversion, increase of grace, joy in the Holy Ghost, the kidneys of the wheat, the finest of the flour, and the honey out of the rock of mercy.

It is said of Constantine, that he impoverished all his empire to enrich Constantinople. God doth pass by other parts of the world as waste ground, or as a wilderness, but the place where he records his name, is his garden; that he will dung, and dig, and dress, and take care that it bring forth good fruit; there he commands his blessing. It is an allusion possibly to great persons, to a general, or an emperor: 'Where the word of a king is, there is power.' The centurion said, 'I say to one soldier, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh; to a third, Do this, and he doeth it.' So God commandeth one ordinance, Go and build up such a saint, and it goeth; he saith to another ordinance, Come and call home such a sinner, and it doeth it; God's word and work go together. Men cannot enable others, or give them power to obey them; they may bid a lame man walk, or a blind man see, but they cannot enable them to walk or see. God with his word giveth strength to do the thing commanded; as in the old, so in the new creation, 'He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast,' Ps. xxxiii. 9. But there the Lord commands his blessing, even life for evermore; the stream of regeneration, or a spiritual life, which shall never cease, but still go forward and increase, till it swell to, and be swallowed up in, the ocean of eternal life, even life for evermore.

Thou hearest, reader, where thy wants may be supplied, through what pipes the water of life is conveyed; do thou, like the impotent man, wait at the porch of Solomon's temple, begging and expecting some alms; God may do more for thee (as for him, Acts iii. 2, 8) than thou dost ask or think.

It was as easy for Boaz (and it might have been done with as little charge) to have given Ruth as much corn at first as would have yielded an ephah of barley, and so have sent her away without any more ado; but he will have her glean it, and then break it. So God could infuse grace immediately; but he will have men hear, read, and pray, attend on ordinances, though not as masters, yet as means of grace. He giveth earthly riches to them that are diligent in their particular callings; so he giveth heavenly riches to them that are diligent about their general calling.

Secondly, Observe in this third help a serious constant use of all the means of grace appointed for this end. David in meditation findeth the Spirit kindling that fire which at last broke out into a holy flame: Ps. xxxix. 3, 'While I was musing, the fire burned.'

The two disciples at godly conference found Jesus Christ to make a third; while they were discoursing of him, he presents himself to them, causing their hearts to burn within them, and openeth

their eyes to know him. Dead coals are kindled by live ones. Oh it is good for thee to be among the saints! Thomas, by missing one meeting, did his soul unspeakable dis-service.

Cornelius, at prayer in his house, had a messenger from heaven, directing him whither to send for one to instruct him in the way of salvation, Acts x. *initio*. Prayer hath been a prevalent orator at the throne of grace; many that have gone thither with prayers and petitions, have come away with praises and thanksgivings.

Jacob added tears to his prayers, and as a prince prevailed with God: 'He wept and made supplication, and prevailed,' Hosea. xii. 4. Music sounds best upon the waters; such water of a sinner, mingled with the blood of a Saviour, hath melted the very heart of God: 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,' Ps. li. 17.

When Daniel was fasting his body, an angel is sent to feast his soul, Dan. ix. 21. While some have been casting themselves down, God hath been raising them up. Papists on their fasting days deny themselves flesh, but have dainty fare, costly sweetmeats. Thou mayest, reader, if thou humblest thyself under the mighty hand of God, expect that he should in his own time lift thee up: these duties have helped to increase, and also to beget holiness.

The eunuch was reading the Scripture, when Philip was commanded, by commission from the Holy Ghost, to join himself to his chariot, and to instruct him in the knowledge of Christ, Acts viii. 33. Junius, by reading John i., Augustine by reading Rom. xiii., were converted. The three thousand, Acts iii., by hearing, came to love; and truly many thousands have found the gospel of Christ preached to become the power of God unto salvation. Cyprian confesseth that he was converted from idolatry and necromancy by hearing the history of the prophet Jonah read and expounded by Cecilius, whom therefore he calleth the father of his new life. Faith and repentance are both wrought by hearing, Rom. x. 14; Acts iii. 37. The wandering sinner is most frequently reduced by the Scripture, either read or heard; God calls to him when he is running away, saying, 'Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return.' In all God's great works there is ordinarily a word accompanying it: as in the creation, 'God said, Let there be light;' when Christ raised Lazarus, 'Lazarus come forth;' when he converted Paul, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' at the great day, 'Arise ye dead, and come to judgment.' The devil got in at first into man's heart by his ear. The dragon bites the elephant's ear, and thence sucks his blood, knowing that to be the only place which

he cannot reach with his trunk to defend. The Spirit of God comes in with the word, 2 Cor. iii. 8; Rom. i. 12; Gal. iii. 2.

As that word of God to Abraham, 'Sarah thy wife shall have a son,' Gen. xviii. 19; that word, I say, gave birth and being to Isaac, when there was no likelihood or possibility of his being from his parents; so the word of God gives a spiritual birth and being to men and women, when there is no likelihood or possibility in nature, yea, when their natures are in flat opposition and contrariety to it.

The word discovereth our diseases, Rom. vii. 7; James ii. 9: makes us feel our sickness, Rom. vii. 9; applieth the medicine for our cure, Mat. xi. 28; Isa. lv. 1; Rom. x. 14.

The word killeth sin, casteth down Satan, enliveneth the soul; Eph. vi. 15; Jer. xxiii. 29; Rev. xii. 11; John v. 24, and xvii. 17; Isa. xi. 6-9; Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 18; James i. 18.

Thus thou seest that the physician of souls hath several means for the cure of thy malady; do not thou neglect any, neither reading nor hearing, neither fasting nor praying, neither meditation nor godly conference, neither secret, nor private, nor public duties, for thou knowest not which may do the deed. Christ may wait at that very door which thou keepest shut, at that ordinance which thou omittest to enter into thy soul. If thou desirest that he should meet thee in any duty, do thou meet him in every duty. How foolish art thou to take any one horse out of the team, when the load is so weighty, even thine endless welfare, and all little enough, to draw thine untoward heart towards heaven. The husbandman that hath a piece of ground which lieth at the end of his fallow, still balked before, will be sure to plough up, and expecteth a better crop out of that than out of any such quantity of ground in the field. Reader, if thou hast balked any of the forementioned duties, for thy soul's sake set upon it speedily, for undoubtedly thou mayest reap a greater harvest by it than thou imaginest.

Friend, have a care of secret, private, public duties; for all must be minded by them that would be new-moulded. How many thousands among us do wilfully murder their souls! Some poison them by crying enormities, others starve them by the omission of duties. It was a pitiful equivocation of the Duke d'Alva, before Haarlem, that promised the soldiers their lives, and afterwards killed them with hunger, saying, that though he promised them their lives, yet he did not promise that they should have food. Art not thou a cheater and murderer of thy soul, in promising it spiritual life, when thou deniest it the means of life? As ever

thou wouldst have a harvest of grace, do thou plough up and sow the ground of thine heart with all the means which God hath ordained for that end.

Thirdly, Be thou serious in thine attendance on the ordinances of God. Be in earnest when thou art about soul affairs; consider, when thou art praying, or hearing, or reading, or conferring with Christians, it is for thy life, it is for thy soul, it is for eternity; and do whatsoever the Lord calleth thee to do, for the quickening thy dying soul, with all thine heart, with all thy might, for there is no doing it in the grave whither thou art hastening. When Samson would destroy the enemies of God, he bowed himself with all his might, Judges xvi. 30; when David was waiting upon the ark of God, he danced before the Lord with all his might, 2 Sam. vi. 14; so when thou hearest for the death of thy sins, thou shouldst hear with all thy might, Ezek. xl. 4. When thou prayest for the life of thy soul, thou shouldst pray with all thy might, 1 Thes. v. 17; ah, how should they hear, and read, and pray for regeneration, that have but a few days, nay, hours possibly, to do it in, between whom and eternal burnings there is but a little airy breath, and if they be not regenerated before they die, they are ruined, they are damned for ever!

A child may handle the mother's breast, and play with it, and kiss it, but all this while he gets no good, till at last he layeth his mouth to the breast, gets the nipple fast, sucks with his might and strength, and then he draweth nourishment. Reader, it may be thou hast minded duties and frequented ordinances, yet possibly hast got no good by them; it is likely then that thou dost but play with them, dally about them, doing them as if thou didst them not; if ever therefore thou wouldst get good by them, thou must be serious and in earnest about them, do them with all thy soul, with all thy strength, knowing that they are of infinite weight and endless concernment to thee, considering that if God do not now hear thee, in thy day of grace, he will never, never hear thee; and if thou do not now hear him, thou shalt shortly never, never more have such an offer.

I doubt not, friend, but thou art serious about toys and trifles; thou canst rise early, and go to bed late, and work hard all day, and have thy mind steadfastly occupied about those foolish things of the world from which within a short time thou shalt be parted for ever. How busy are vain men, like a company of ants, to increase their heap of earth! Oh think of it, is it not pity such a plant should grow in Egypt, which would thrive so well in Canaan?

How fitly, how finely would that seriousness and fervency which thou usest about earth become and suit with heaven! Ah, it would be worth the while to be most covetous and sedulous about the things of God and Christ, thy soul and eternity.

Fourthly, Be constant in the use of the means of grace; pray and wait, hear and wait, read and wait, watch and wait: 'In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this, or that, or whether they both shall be alike good,' Eccles. xi. 6. In every morning sow thy seed, pray, read, meditate; in the evening withhold not thine hand, do the same; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, at which the Spirit of God will give thee a gracious effectual meeting for thy conversion or salvation, or whether both shall conduce equally to thy spiritual and eternal advantage. Do not expect, like the Hyperboreans, to sow and reap in a day; allow some distance between seed-time and harvest. Physic doth not work immediately when it is taken into the body; be confident thou shalt reap in time, if thou dost not faint.

Suppose thou wert sick of some mortal painful disease, a dead man in thy own and others' thoughts, and an able faithful physician should warrant thy cure in time, upon condition that thou wouldst follow his advice, and diet thyself all the while, wouldst thou not use all that he prescribed, and wait, and long to be recovered! Thou wast wounded in a moment, but art not so soon recovered; it is good to wait God's leisure. What Christ said in regard of his coming in judgment, I say in regard of his coming in mercy, Watch therefore, for thou knowest not when the Son of man will come, whether this day, to-morrow, or next week; lose no time, neglect no opportunity. The heathen Titus could bewail the loss of that day wherein he had done no good: Friends, I have lost a day;[1] and wilt thou wilfully lose half a day, when every moment is of more worth to thee than a kingdom? Naaman the Syrian washed seven times in Jordan; the six times washing could not do it, it was upon the seventh time washing that he was cured of his leprosy, and his flesh came again like the flesh of a child. Do thou often bathe thy soul in the waters of the sanctuary; at one time or other, if thou faithfully practisest this help, thou wilt find them healing waters. Observe what Saul lost by not waiting God's leisure; Samuel had told Saul, 1 Sam. x. 8, 'And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal, . . . seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.' This pre-

[1] Amici diem perdidi; hodie non regnavimus.

cept was enjoined Saul, I suppose, not because Samuel might be hindered by some necessary occasions till seven days were come, which reason some give, but for the trial of Saul's obedience to God in waiting his appointed time. Now Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 8 and 13, waited six days, nay, towards the latter end of the seventh day for Samuel; but because he waited not full seven days he lost the kingdom: 'Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God,' saith Samuel to Saul; 'for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom for ever; but now thy kingdom shall not continue, for the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart.'

Oh how sad was it that Saul should lose a kingdom for want of two or three hours' patience! had he tarried a little longer, he had had the kingdom for ever; but is it not sadder if thou shouldst lose the eternal kingdom of heaven by not tarrying God's time, by not waiting his leisure!

Reader, lie at the pool, and give not over till the angel doth move upon the waters. When one of the fathers had it suggested to him by the devil, that it was in vain for him to mind God, for he should never get to heaven; then, saith he, I will follow hard after God, that I may enjoy as much of him as is possible on earth. When blind Bartimeus was rebuked by the disciples for calling after Christ for his bodily sight, he crieth the more earnestly, 'Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me,' Mark x. 15. Whatever discouragements thou meetest with in thine attendance on God in ordinances, be like the English jet fired by water, and not like our ordinary fires, quenched by it; let them add to, not diminish, thy resolution and courage; let not one repulse beat thee off; be violent, give a second storm to the kingdom of heaven. Parents sometimes hide themselves to make their children continue seeking. He that would not at first open his mouth, nor vouchsafe the woman of Canaan a word, doth, upon her continued and fervent petitions, at last open his hand and give her whatever she ask: 'O woman, be it unto thee as thou wilt.' Continued importunity is undeniable oratory.

And truly, if after all thy pains thou findest Jesus Christ, will it not make amends for thy long patience? Men that venture often at a lottery, though they take blanks twenty times, if afterwards they get a golden bason and ewer it will make them abundant satisfaction. Suppose thou shouldst continue knocking twenty, nay, forty years, yet if at last, though but one hour before thou diest, thy heart be opened to Christ, and he be received into

thy soul, and when thou diest heaven be opened to thee, and thy soul received into it; will it not infinitely requite thee for all thy labour! Oh think of it, and resolve never to be dumb while God is deaf, never to leave off prayer till God return a gracious answer. And for thy comfort know, that he who began his psalm with, 'How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?' comes to conclude it with, 'I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath dealt bountifully with me,' Ps. xiii. 1, 6.

Fifthly, Be serious and constant in the use of all the means of grace which God hath appointed for the renewing of souls, but expect the blessing only from God. Elijah, when he had filled the trenches with water, put the wood in order, laid the sacrifice on the altar, then he looks up to heaven for a blessing, and then fire came down from heaven, whereby God manifesteth his acceptance, 1 Kings xviii. 36. So do thou hear as for heaven, sigh as for thy soul, perform every duty as for eternity, attend on ordinances with such seriousness as one that believeth his unchangeable estate is at stake in them; but when thou art doing them, and when thou hast set all in order, then let thine heart look up to heaven for success, expect the fire of the Holy Ghost to come down from heaven. Be as diligent about duties and ordinances as if they could regenerate thee, and do all things, but depend on God, as one that knoweth that without him they can do nothing. 'Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and trust in the Lord.' 'Trust in the Lord, and do good,' Ps. iv. 5, and xxxvii. 3. Look on ordinances only as, for indeed they are no more than, the order in which, and the instrument with which, he is pleased to work. Trust in God will not consist either with the neglect of, or with trust in, means.

Be thou but faithful in following these directions, and doubt not of God's benediction; expect that he who commandeth thee to seek, should enable thee to find. Do not as unwise archers, that shoot their arrows at random, never looking to see them again; but as Jonathan, who, when he had shot his arrows, had one ready to fetch them again. Expect to reap the fruit of those duties which thou sowest. Go to God's house in the multitude of his mercies, Ps. v. 7, looking that mercy should give thee a meeting, and grant thee a blessing. 'I will direct my prayer to thee, and will look up,' Ps. v. 3, that is, I will trade, I will send out my spiritual commodities, and expect a gainful return; I will make my prayers, and not give them for lost, but look up for an answer. God will bring man home by a way contrary to that by which he

wandered from him. Man fell from God by distrust, by having God in suspicion; God will bring him back by trust, by having good thoughts of him. Oh, how richly laden might the vessel which thou sendest out come home wouldst thou but long and look for its return!

I come now to remove some hindrances, or answer some objections which arise in men's hearts against the truths delivered.

CHAPTER XVIII.

An answer to three objections.

The first objection answered—namely, Man's weakness and inability to turn unto God.

Secondly, That unregenerate men sin in performing duties, and attending on ordinances.

Thirdly and lastly, If I be elected I shall be saved, let me live never so wickedly, and neglect the means prescribed for my recovery.

Obj. 1. Thou mayest probably object against this exhortation to mind regeneration, that thou hast no power to leave and loathe sin, to believe in, and submit to, Jesus Christ. Therefore, why do I call upon thee so earnestly? to what purpose do I bid thee make thee a new heart, and a new spirit, turn unto God, and embrace his only Son as thy Lord?

To this, and the other subsequent objections concerning election, and thy sinfulness in performing duties, I might answer only with the apostle, 'Who art thou that repliest against God?' Rom. ix. 20; or with Eliphaz, 'Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?' Job iv. 17. But I will answer with Elihu, 'Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee what I have to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with me,' Job xxxvi. 2–4.

First, I confess that thou art unable either to loathe sin or love God by thine own strength. The precepts of the word speak man's duty, but God's power; they teach us not what we can do, but what we should do. Because a man ought to pay his debts, therefore it doth not follow that he is able to pay them.[1] Divine com-

[1] See more of man's impotency before.

mands are to convince men of their weakness, not to shew their strength. I acknowledge that by nature thou art dead in trespasses and sins, and canst neither see, nor hear, nor savour spiritual things, Eph. ii. 1. Thou art without strength, Rom. v. 6, not able to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5, nor to speak a good word, Mat. xii. 34; nay, thou canst do nothing that is acceptable to God, John xv. 3, or profitable to thyself.

None can be aforehand with God. We cannot seek him till we have found him; he will be sought that he may be found, and found that he may be sought, saith Bernard.

Secondly, I answer, that the cause of man's weakness is from himself, the fault is not in God: 'God made man upright, but he hath found out many inventions,' Eccles. vii. 29. What was there wanting on God's part? He created man after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; he gives him a law to direct him, a threatening to warn him, a promise to encourage him, ability and power to carry himself uprightly. Man hearkeneth to Satan, distrusteth God, despiseth the law, trieth new inventions, whereby he undoeth himself. Is God to be blamed? Surely no. 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and then his heart fretteth against the Lord,' Prov. xix. 3.

If thou urgest the objection further, that one man sinned, and the whole generation of men suffer, that thy weakness proceedeth not from thy fall, but Adam's; I answer, that a child may as well complain that his prince is unjust, because he is born the son of a beggar, or a traitor; indeed it is an unhappiness to thee that thou art so descended, but not unrighteousness in God. If God gave thy father an earthly estate of a thousand pound per annum, and he prove a prodigal, and leave thee not a thousand farthings, wilt thou blame God? Is he to be charged for thy father's riotousness? Truly thus it is in spirituals; God gave Adam a sufficient stock, he wasted it by wilful disobeying the command given him, and thereby leaves all his children poor and beggarly; is God now in the least fault? Because thou hast lost thy power of obeying, should God therefore lose his right of commanding? A servant that makes himself drunk, and thereby unable to do his master's work, is not therefore disobliged from his service. A prodigal debtor, though he hath spent his estate in drinking and dicing, may justly be called upon, and sued for his debts.

But thou mayest say, thou didst not consent to trust thy stock in Adam's hand. I reply, Hath not a father power to oblige and bind his son? Adam was the father of all, and did bear without

question an extraordinary natural affection to his children; his own interest was involved with theirs; he and they lived and died, stood and fell together; he had full power over his own will; Satan could not force him to sin; his obedience for all was no less easy than for himself. There was nothing commanded him but what was equal and just, and what he was thoroughly enabled to do. If Adam had stood, thou hadst shared in his gains, which had been unspeakably great; therefore it is but righteous that thou shouldst share in his losses.

Besides, though thou didst not make any particular choice of Adam to stand or fall for thee, yet God made choice of him for thee; who being goodness itself, bears more goodwill to thee than thou to thyself; and being wisdom itself, made the wisest choice, and took the wisest course, for the good of man. This way made most for man's safety and quiet. For if he had stood, all fear of losing our happiness had quite vanished, whereas if every man had been left to stand or fall for himself, a man would ever have been in fear of falling. And again, this was the surest way to have all our estates preserved; for Adam having the charge of the estates of all the men that ever should be in the world, he was the more pressed to look about him, lest he should be robbed, and undo so many thousands. Adam was the head of all mankind, and all mankind are members of that head. Now, if the head plot and act treason against the king, the whole body is found guilty, and the whole body must suffer. If these things satisfy not, God hath a day coming, wherein he will declare his own righteous proceedings before angels and men, Rom. ii. 4.[1]

Reader, take heed of darkening counsel by words or thoughts without knowledge, for we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, Job xxxviii. 2; Rom. ii. 2.

Thirdly, I answer, that thine impotency lieth in thine obstinacy. Thou pretendest that thou canst not, but the truth is thou wilt not, Luke xix. 41; John v. 40. Thou art resolvedly evil, and then fliest out against God himself, that thou canst not do good, Eccles. viii. 11; Jer. xliv. 16.

Thy disease is deadly and dangerous; the physician of souls offereth thee his help, and he is both willing and able to cure thee. Now thou wilfully throwest away his physic, feedest on such things which thou canst forbear, and knowest will increase thy disease; and then tellest the world that thou art not able to cure thyself. Is this honest or rational dealing?

[1] Shepherd's Sincere Convert, edit. 5, p. 44.

If a naked man be offered clothing, or a man ready to starve food, and they throw it away from them, and flatly deny to accept of them, who is to blame if these perish with nakedness and hunger?

Thou hadst a poisonous egg from thy father; but the serpent that stings thee to death is from thy warming and hatching that egg in thine own breast. All the men on earth, and all the devils in hell, could not damn thee, were it not for thy wilfulness in sin; and canst thou expect that Jesus Christ should save thee against thine own will? that he should carry thee to heaven whether thou wilt or no? Believe it, a state of sin and wrath is the matter of thine own choice. The door which shuts thee out of the Father's house is bolted against thee by thine own hands.

Answer me this question, or else never more make this objection: Art thou willing to turn from sin unto God? Art thou willing to take the Son of God for thy Saviour and Lord? If thou art willing, I am sure God is willing; he hath confirmed it with an oath, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Jesus Christ is willing that sinners should live, or he would not so willingly have died such a death; he hath paid the price of thy ransom, and offereth thee a happier estate than that of which Adam deprived thee. If thou art willing to accept of thy freedom thou mayest have it: 'If any man will, let him drink of the water of life freely,' Rev. xxii.; and if thou art not willing, why dost thou complain?

Fourthly, I answer, the fault is clearly in thyself, because thou neglectest to do what thou hast power to do; thou hast power, without any special grace, to perform duties, to hear the word, to pray in secret and with thy family, to forbear thy wicked company, by swearing, lying, drinking, scoffing at godliness, and yet dost not mind those duties constantly, nor forbear those sins. Shall a servant, (friend, be thine own judge,) which is trusted with five pounds to employ for his master's honour, spend this in whoring and gaming, and then blame his master for not trusting him with thousands? When man broke by his fall, there was some stock left in his hands,—not enough to set him up again, but that which might do him some good; now they spend this profusely, they throw away those checks of conscience which escaped the ruins of the fall; they corrupt themselves in what they know, and wickedly refuse to do what they can, and yet are so impudent as to fly in the face of the ever blessed God, that he doth not give them power to do more.

Fifthly, Thy weakness and impotency should drive thee to Christ

for strength; thy misery by the first Adam should cause thee to mind thy recovery by the second Adam. The word of God discovereth to thee the necessity of regeneration, thine own inability to do it, that thou mightest ply the throne of grace, fly to Jesus Christ for help and succour.[1] A man that is lifting a piece of timber, and finds it too heavy for him, will call in help; thus the law is a schoolmaster to drive thee to Christ. When thou considerest with thyself, that thou must be regenerated or damned in hell for ever, and that thou art altogether unable to renew and sanctify thyself, how diligent should it make thee in attendance on Jesus Christ for his Spirit and grace! how shouldst thou wait on thy Redeemer, in reading, hearing, praying, meditating, using all those means which he hath appointed for the conversion of thy soul!

Obj. 2. Secondly, It may be thou wilt say, You press me much to pray, and hear, and frequent the means of grace; but I sin in doing so,—I sin in praying, I sin in hearing and singing, and would you have me sin?

I answer, first, Thou sinnest in eating and drinking, and following thy calling, in not doing these things upon right principles, and for right ends, and wilt thou therefore forbear them? Thou wilt pamper and please thy body, right or wrong, not only in the use, but even in the abuse, of the creature; but how ordinary an excuse will make thee neglect thy soul!

Secondly, Regenerate men themselves sin in all their performances, though not in such a manner as unregenerate men do, and should they therefore lay them down?

Thirdly, No pretence whatsoever can excuse from obedience to clear precepts; remember also that the commands of God do not interfere or contradict each other. Now God expressly commandeth thee, though thou art in a natural estate, to perform duties. Peter, when he had told Simon Magus that he was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, yet he bids him pray to the Lord, Acts viii. 22, if peradventure the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him. Our sinning in duties cannot abrogate that law of God which enjoins duties; as God's precepts are not measures of our strength, so they are not lessened by our weakness. The Ninevites, though unregenerate, as some think, yet when threatened with destruction, did both pray and fast, and found that it was not in vain, Jonah iv. 3.

[1] Lex data ut gratia quæreretur; gratia data ut lex impleretur.—*Aug. de Spe.*, lib. i. cap. 19.

Fourthly, Thou sinnest less in performing duties than in neglecting them. If thou art resolved to go on in a course of sinning, and damning thy soul, I know not what to say to thee; the Lord pity thee; but if thou hast any desire of salvation in a gospel way, thou offendest far less in waiting on God in his ordinances, than those do that refuse them. In performing duties without suitable grace thou failest in the manner of divine worship; others that omit duties, fail both in the matter and manner. Thou owest God outward as well as inward service—the confession of thy mouth, as well as the conversion of thine heart; surely then, if thou givest God the former, though without the latter, thou dost not sin so much as they that give him neither.

Fifthly, Shouldst thou neglect the means of grace, thou wouldst make thy condition, which is already dreadful, to be desperate. If ever God meet thee, it must be in his own way, Rom. x. 15, 17; Prov. viii. I believe thou scarce ever heardest of any man converted while he cast by the means of grace which God afforded him.

Sixthly, If thy condition be so sad that thou sinnest in all thou dost, thou hast the more need to hasten out of it. Ah, who would be quiet one hour in such an estate wherein whatever he doth is abominable to God? Men that are weak and sickly do not therefore forbear food, because they are not able to digest it well, and it may possibly yield some nourishment to their disease, but do therefore eat that they may get strength, and be enabled to overcome their distempers.

Seventhly, God may meet with thee in the means of grace. The ordinances of God are the golden pipes through which he conveyeth the oil of grace from Christ, the olive-tree. God doth not bid thee to wait upon him for nothing; thousands have found by happy experience that they are blessed which watch at wisdom's gate, which wait at the posts of her doors, Prov. viii. latter end. The Ninevites, when Jonah had foretold their ruin, fast and pray, saying, 'Who can tell if God will repent and turn from his fierce anger, that we perish not?' Jonah iii. 9. So now God hath foretold in his word the eternal destruction of all in thy condition; do thou fast and pray, read and meditate; who can tell but God may turn and have mercy upon thee, pour down his Spirit and holiness into thee, that thou perish not? Thou mayest hear and read of the success of others: others have found him in his house of prayer, and why not thou? The mariner cannot make either wind or tide, yet he lieth ready upon the waters and waits for them. The

husbandman cannot cause a harvest, yet he ploughs and soweth, hoping that the heavens will help him. Thou canst not heal thyself; wait therefore at the means. Christ may come when thou little thinkest of it and cure thee. God delights to bless man's industry; his usual course is to meet them that meet him: he hath been found of them that sought him not, and will he hide himself from thee when thou seekest his face? For thine encouragement thou hast his word, which is truth itself, that if thou seek him early thou shalt find him, Prov. viii. 17. Whilst there is life there is hope; thou livest under the means, oh resolve to give God no rest till he gives thee regeneration.

Obj. 3. Thirdly, It is possible thou mayest object, that if thou art predestinated to life, thou shalt be saved, though thou neglectest all these means of salvation; and if thou art not elected, these will do thee no good.

I answer, first, That this looks like the language of one already in hell, though it be found too too often in the mouths of swaggerers upon earth. In evil things the devil would make thee separate the end from the means;—think not of hell, but go on in sin, saith he;—in good things the means from the end;—never trouble thyself with holiness, yet doubt not of heaven.

Secondly, Suppose that thou shouldst live and die in this desperate conclusion, wouldst not thou certainly be damned? Without all controversy, in the other world thou wouldst find what a fine cheat the devil had put upon thee by bringing thee into an opinion which will bring thee inevitably into destruction. Believe it, thou shalt know in the other world who shall have the worst of such cursed conclusions, God or thyself.

Thirdly, The decree of God is a sealed book, and the names in it are secret; therefore thy part is to look to God's revealed will—namely, to make thine election sure, by making thy regeneration sure. Dost thou not know that secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us and our children? Oh, it is dangerous to meddle with the secrets of princes!

Fourthly, This opinion is not believed by thee, but is only pretended as a cloak for thy wickedness and idleness; for if thou dost believe that if God hath elected, he will save thee, however thou livest; why are not thy practices answerable to such principles? Why dost thou not leave thy ground unsowed, and thy calling unfollowed, and say, If God hath decreed me a crop of corn, I shall have it, whether I sow my ground or no; and if God hath decreed me an estate, I shall have it, though I never mind my calling?

Why dost thou not neglect and refuse eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, If God have decreed that I shall live longer, I shall do it, though I never eat, or drink, or sleep? For God hath decreed these things concerning thy ground, estate, and natural life, as well as concerning thine eternal condition in the other world. When I see that thou throwest off all care and means of preserving thy life on earth, and expectest notwithstanding to continue alive, then I may believe that thy forementioned thoughts are really such in regard of eternal life; but till then I shall be confident that this conclusion is only a feigned plea in the behalf of the devil and thy carnal corruptions.

Fifthly, The word of God, which must shortly try thee for thine everlasting life or death, doth declare to thee fully and clearly that God predestinateth to the means as well as the end. Where then wilt thou appear that neglectest the means? That the means and end are joined together in God's decree is fully proved to thee in the previous part of this book; therefore let not Satan so far delude thee as to make thee part them. I shall conclude my answer to this objection (for truly it is so irrational that I do not think it worthy of six lines) with a story which I have sometime read. Ludovicus, a learned man of Italy, by sinful beginnings came at last to this conclusion, It matters not what I do, or how I live; if I be predestinated to life, I am sure to be saved; if otherwise, I cannot help it. Thus with this desperate opinion he lived a long time, till at last he fell dangerously sick, and sent for a skilful physician, earnestly desiring his advice. The physician, beforehand acquainted with his opinion, told him, Surely it will be needless to use any means for your recovery; for if the time of your death be come, it will be impossible to avoid it. Ludovicus upon this began to consider of his own madness and folly in neglecting the means for his soul, bemoaned his sin sincerely, took physic, and was through the blessing of God recovered both in soul and body. Oh that what I have written might work such an effect upon thy spirit! Consider, friend, if, notwithstanding God's decree, means must be used for thy temporal estate, should they not also for thine eternal estate? 'Be not wise in thine own eyes, but fear the Lord and depart from evil.' 'Labour to cleanse thy ways by taking heed thereto according to his word,' Prov. vii.; Ps. cxix. 9.

Reader, I have now finished this weighty exhortation, which doth so nearly concern thy precious soul, and unchangeable condition in the other world. Thou seest how large an epistle I have written to thee with mine own hand; many an hour's sleep have I

lost to awaken thee out of thy carnal security: but I am ignorant whether the work be done or no, which is of such unspeakable weight; or whether thou art resolved to set upon it, through the strength of Christ, in good earnest. I preach to thee, I pray for thee, I desire and endeavour so to live as to set thee a pattern. Oh that I knew what to do that might be more effectual for thy recovery. Friend, ponder seriously the truth and concernment of the particulars delivered. Is there not infinite reason why thou shouldst speedily and heartily submit to the counsel of the almighty God for the enlivening of thy dying soul? What more weighty business hast thou to do than to set upon these things whereby thou mayest avoid unquenchable burnings, and arrive at fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore? Is thy ploughing or sowing, thy buying or selling, nay, thine eating or drinking, half so necessary as the regeneration of thy soul, without which the everlasting God hath told thee over and over that thou shalt not be saved? Oh that thou didst believe what it is to be in heaven or hell for ever, ever, ever!

I have read of a woman, that when her house was on fire she was very busy, and wrought hard in carrying out her goods, but at last bethought herself of her only child, which she never minded before for eagerness about her goods, but had left it burning in the flames, and then, when it was too late, she crieth and roareth out sadly, O my child! Ah my poor child! Truly thou art in danger, thine everlasting estate is every moment in jeopardy, if thou now busiest thyself wholly in scraping, and carking, and caring for thy body, forgetting thy poor soul, leaving that to the fire that shall never go out. Consider there is a time, I would say an eternity, coming, when thou wilt think of it, though then it will be too late; and then, oh then, how sadly, how sorrowfully, wilt thou sigh and sob, howl and roar, and screech out, O my soul, ah my poor soul, how wretchedly have I forgot my precious soul! It is an inconceivable mercy that yet thou hast a day of grace wherein thou mayest think of and endeavour the good of thy soul. For thy soul's sake, for the Lord's sake, O dear friend, mind it speedily; hear God how he calleth, or then, though thou callest loud and long, he will never, never hear thee. When the mother of Thales urged him to marry, he told her it was too soon; she still importuning him, he told her afterwards that it was too late.[1] Regeneration is thine espousal unto Jesus Christ. The Father of eternity calleth upon thee, wooeth, beseeching, commandeth thee,

[1] Diog. Lært.

now while it is called to-day, to accept of his own Son for thy Lord and husband; do not, oh do not say, It is too soon, I will do it hereafter. I assure thee, before to-morrow night God may say it is too late, and then thou art lost for ever. 'Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end, lest thou mourn at last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, (when thy soul is in hell tormented,) and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!' Prov. xix. 20, and v. 11–13.

CHAPTER XIX.

An exhortation to the regenerate.

First, To give God the glory of that good work which is wrought in them.

I come now, in the last place, to a word of exhortation to the regenerate. If without regeneration none can attain salvation, then, O new-born creature, it highly concerneth thee to be thankful to God, and to be faithful to men.

First, Be thou thankful to God. What wilt thou render to the Lord for this great inestimable benefit? Is not thine heart ravished in the consideration of that good-will which took such notice of thee a poor worm? 'Praise,' saith the psalmist, 'waiteth for thee in Sion,' Ps. lxv. 1; and well it may, for of Sion it may be said, this and that man was born in her, Ps. lxxxvii. 5, 6. A heathen had three reasons for which he blessed God. One of them was, that he had made him a man, a rational creature. I am sure thou hast more cause to bless God that he hath made thee not only a man, but a Christian; not only a rational, but a new creature. They that are new-born in Sion have infinite reason to honour God with the songs of Sion. If David praised God because he was wonderfully made in regard of the frame of his body, Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15, what cause hast thou to praise him for the curious workmanship of grace in thy soul! Thou canst never give too great thanks, for whom God hath wrought such great things. Do thou say, 'The Lord hath done great things for me; whereof I am glad,' Ps. cxxvi. 3. What joy is there at the birth of a great heir or a prince! What ringing of bells, and discharging of guns, and making of bonfires, when those infants are born to many crosses as

well as to crowns, nay, and their sceptres wither and crowns moulder away? Oh the joy which thou mayest have in God, who art born a child of God, an heir of heaven, of a kingdom which can never be shaken! Do wicked men keep the day of their natural birth with so much pleasure and delight, when they were therein born in sin and brought forth in iniquity; when by reason of those births they are obnoxious to eternal death? and wilt thou not keep the day of thy spiritual birth with joy, whereby thou art purified from thy natural pollution, and assured of entrance into the purchased possession, where thou shalt be perfectly purified?

It was the speech of Jonadab to Amnon, 'Why art thou lean from day to day, being the king's son?' So say I to thee, Why art thou sad, who art God's son? Rejoice, O Christian! thy name is written in the book of life, thy soul hath the infallible token of special and eternal love. It was matter of great joy that Christ was born at Bethlehem. 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,' Luke ii. 10, 11. But I tell thee, it may be matter of greater joy to thee that Christ is born in thine heart. For notwithstanding the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, thousands and millions go to hell; but Christ was never formed in any one's heart, but that man went to heaven.

It is reported of Annello, who lately made an insurrection at Naples, that considering how mean he was before, and to what greatness he was raised, he was so transported that he could not sleep. Oh, how shouldst thou be transported with the thoughts of that infinite happiness of which thou art an heir! 'Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing; for it is he that hath (new) made us, and not we ourselves. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name,' Ps. c. *per tot.*

Give thanks to God in thine heart by a humble admiration, and in thy life by a holy conversation.

First, Give thanks unto God in thine heart by a humble admiration of his bottomless mercy.

If David, when he considered the glorious heavens which God had made for man, crieth out so affectionately, 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou dost thus visit him?' Ps. viii.;—surely thou, when thou considerest the work of grace and holiness which God hath wrought within thee, and the place of glory and happiness which he hath prepared for thee, mayest well fall down on thy knees, and looking up to heaven, say,

What is man, that thou art so mindful of him? and what am I, a poor son of man, that thou dost thus visit me? Thou hast made me but a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned me with glory and honour, with grace and holiness. 'Who am I, O Lord? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?' 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19.

Friend, let free grace have the honour and glory of all the good bestowed on thee, or expected by thee. Alas! who made thee to differ from others? wast not thou in the same lump of clay with them that perish? now that the potter should make thee a vessel of honour, to be set upon the high shelf of heaven, as the martyr's phrase is, when others are vessels of dishonour, and firebrands of hell, hast not thou unspeakable cause to wonder at his mercy and good-will towards thee? That thy person should be justified, when others are under the guilt of all their transgressions, is merely from mercy, Rom. iii. 24, and v. 18, 19. 'The free gift came upon all to justification of life.' That thy nature should be sanctified, when others are left in their filth and pollution, is altogether from his grace and favour. 'Among whom we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is *rich in mercy*, for his *great love* wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: that in the ages to come he might shew the *exceeding riches of his grace*, in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus,' Eph. ii. 1–10. That thou shalt be saved with a great and glorious salvation, when others shall be damned with a grievous and endless destruction: that thou shalt enjoy rivers of pleasures, when others must be tormented day and night with intolerable pain, is only from God's good pleasure, Titus iii. 3, 4. The jewel which enricheth thee is a gift, John iv. 10. The hand which receiveth it is a gift, Phil. i. 29.[1] It is worthy thy observation how full the Spirit of God is in excluding thee and everything in thee from having any hand in meriting thine acceptance here, or inheritance hereafter; not by works, Rom. ix. 11; not of works, Rom. xi. 6; not according to works, 2 Tim. i. 9; without works, Rom. iv. 6. Now if mercy doth all for thee, should not mercy

[1] Faith justifieth, not as *manus laborantis*, which earns a penny, but as *manus mendicantis*, that receiveth an alms or jewel by which the soul is justified and enriched.

have the honour of all from thee? What did God see in thee more than in others, that he chose thee to glory? What did he foresee in thee more than in others, that he called thee by his grace? Thou wast not only empty of, but contrary to, all saving good; many a motion of the Spirit didst thou neglect, many an invitation from Christ didst thou reject. How long did he strive with thine untoward heart, before he conquered it! how many a time did he call when thou wouldst not hear! and knock when thou wast so far from opening, that thou didst bolt and bar the door against him! How justly might he have sent thee, as well as thousands of others, to hell! what mercies didst thou abuse, what means of grace didst thou misimprove! Yet how did he wait upon thee by his unwearied patience, woo thee by many a good providence, and at last win thee to himself, notwithstanding all thy resistance! I tell thee, 'It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy,' Rom. ix. 16. Oh therefore admire mercy! say in thine heart, I was a blasphemer, I was a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord. Now to the King immortal, invisible, eternal, be honour and glory; blessed be God who hath begotten me again to a lively hope of an inheritance that fades not away, 1 Pet. i. 3. Wonder at God's distinguishing mercy: 'Lord, how is it that thou revealest thyself to us, and not to the world?' said the disciple, John xiv. 22. Shouldst not thou think, Lord, how is it that I, unworthy I, should be chosen, when others are rejected? that I should be called when others are neglected, that I, who came into the world with the same rage against God and godliness, and did many a day run with others to the same excess of riot, should turn about, be in love with holiness, and run the ways of thy commandments, when many others still wallow in their wickedness, and are every hour hastening unto hell? Lord, how is it that thou hast revealed thyself to me, and not to the world?

Plutarch wonders how the fig-tree, having that extreme bitterness in its leaves, branches, and stock, should yet bring forth sweet fruit. Hast thou not more cause to wonder, how thou, so extremely polluted, being in the very gall of bitterness by nature, and having a fountain of poison in thee, shouldst ever come to bear good fruit, and send forth pleasant streams; truly thou mayest have the same motto with the olive, which groweth in the craggy clefts without moisture or rooting, *a cœlo*, from heaven; thou couldst never do it unless it were give thee from above; therefore, as thy piety came down from heaven, so let thy praise go up to heaven. Elisabeth

wondered that the mother of the Lord should come unto her house; oh do thou stand amazed that the Lord of that mother should come into thy heart! 'Give thanks night and day to the Father, who hath made thee meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light,' 1 Col. i. 12, 13.

Secondly, Give thanks to God in thy life by a holy conversation. As thou shouldst see thy dignity and take comfort in it, so also consider thy duty, and take care about it. God hath done singular things for thee; what singular things wilt thou do for him? The life of thankfulness consisteth in the thankfulness of thy life. Oh the bonds, the infinite obligations by which thou art tied to thy Saviour! Great things are bestowed on thee, and great things are expected from thee. Thy life should be answerable to thy birth and breeding; thou art born of God, hast blood-royal running in thy veins, art brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, do not therefore stain the house of which thou descendest, nor disgrace the family of faith to which thou belongest. 'Should such a man as I fly?' said Nehemiah: think with thyself, Should such a man as I, that am enrolled in the book of life, regenerated by the Spirit of God, redeemed from my vain conversation with the precious blood of Christ; should such a man as I dishonour my Father, grieve my Comforter by frothy language, unseemly carriage, or being guilty of anything in my practices that is unsuitable to my great and honourable privilege? The Father hath chosen me to be a vessel of honour, shall I defile myself with the filth of sin? The Son hath bought me with a vast sum, shall not I yield myself up wholly to his service? The Spirit hath made my heart its habitation, and shall I suffer in it the least unholiness! I can never pay God for his boundless love, but I will endeavour to praise him by a spotless life.

O friend, walk worthy of the calling wherewith thou art called, Eph. iv. 1. There is a comeliness peculiar to thine effectual calling. If a scholar hath another manner of carriage than a scullion, and a courtier than a carter, surely a Christian must lead a different life from them that are dead in sins and trespasses.

Thy calling is high, Phil. iii. 14, and therefore thou shouldst walk above the men of the world. Men that are called to high offices will carry themselves answerable to their places; princes do not live like peasants. Thou art called to be a son of God, a coheir with Christ, a citizen of Sion; the son of a king must, like Absalom, be without blemish from top to toe: 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke,' Phil. ii.

15. Adoption is a translation out of one family into another, and doth disoblige thee from the laws of Satan and his family, and oblige thee to the rules and orders of Christ and his house, into which thou art taken. Thou art called to be a king, Rev. i. 5. 'It is not for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink,' Prov. xxxi., that is, immoderately; such a sin is very bad in a subject, but much worse in a sovereign, as a spot in scarlet is worse than in sackcloth. The transgressions of others have much rebellion and obstinacy in them; but thy sins have more of unkindness and treachery, as being against the covenant: thou art called to reign with Christ in heaven, Oh walk worthy of him that hath called thee unto his kingdom and glory, 1 Thes. ii. 12. Thou that hast hopes to be like Christ in glory, shouldst labour, as for life, to be like him in grace, 1 John iii. 3. Cæsar, when he heard that Brutus conspired against him, would not believe it, but said, He looks for this skin, meaning, he expecteth to be my heir, to succeed me in the empire, and therefore he will not be so unworthy as to plot against me.[1] Reader, hath not Christ more cause to expect that thy present deportment should be answerable to thy future preferment!

Thy calling is holy, 2 Tim. i. 9, and therefore thy carriage should be holy; other callings may put glory upon a man, but cannot infuse grace into a man; other callings may change thy condition, but this hath changed thy disposition. Thou art called to be a saint, shouldst thou not then live like a saint? 1 Cor. i. 2. Alexander would often bid a captain of his name, Remember that thou art called Alexander;[2] that the captain, remembering his name, might do nothing unworthy of it. Truly so say I to thee, Remember that thou art called to be a saint, to be a Christian, and do not by the unexemplariness of thy life cause that worthy name by which thou art called to be blasphemed.

Thy calling is heavenly, Heb. iii. 1, and therefore thy conversation should be in heaven; it is from God, and therefore must lead thee to God. Oh how stately is the deportment of worldlings, when they are called to high employments! How little should all the things on earth be in thine eyes who art fixed in heaven! Themistocles walking with one by the sea-side, and seeing a precious treasure on the earth, said to his fellow-traveller, Do thou take it up, for thou art not Themistocles. If the men of the world, whose portions are in this life, have their affections set on things below, and their conversations on earth, remember that thy treasure is in

[1] Plut. in Vit Jul. Cæs. [2] Recordare nominis Alexander.

heaven, and thine heart must be there also; live as one that belongs to another country. In a word, study, strive, labour, endeavour, watch, pray, hear, read, meditate, that thou mayest in private, in public, upon all occasions, in all companies, in all manner of conversation, 'shew forth the praises of him who hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.

CHAPTER XX.

A second exhortation to the regenerate, to do what they can for the conversion of others.

Secondly, As thou shouldst be thankful to God, so also faithful to men. Thou art converted thyself, do thine utmost to convert others. The lepers coming into the Syrian camp, and finding food enough to relieve themselves, and many others ready to perish with hunger, they first feasted themselves, and afterwards say one to another, 'We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace; if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will befall us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household,' 2 Kings vii. 9. The time was when thou, like the lepers, was famishing thy soul with the husks of the world; now God hath fed thee with the fat things of his house, dost thou well to hold thy peace? Consider them that are pinched with hunger, and call them to God's courts; tell them what large provision he maketh, how the table is spread, his oxen, his fatlings are killed, all things ready; he wanteth only comers and company. Thou dost well to take hold for thyself; but thou dost ill if thou withholdest from others.

Israel was commanded to pity strangers, because they were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Shouldst not thou compassionate them that are strangers from the covenant of promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, carried captive by the devil at his will, considering that thou wast in that house of bondage, in as great slavery to Satan, and subjection to sin, as others; and it was nothing but grace and mercy that redeemed thee. 'Put them in mind,' saith the apostle, 'to be gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.' Why, upon what consideration? 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures; but after that the kindness and love of God our

Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Tit. iii. 1-5.

Wicked men are like those that are drowning, they catch hold on others, and if it be possible, make them sink with themselves; godly men must be like candles, which being lighted, kindle others.

Grace is compared to oil, which is of a diffusive, spreading nature, Mat. xxv. 4; and it doth, like the oil in the widow's barrel, increase by pouring out; the oil never ceased running, till she ceased pouring. The more thou improvest thy little stock of grace, the more thy master will trust thee with. Peter Martyr speaketh of some mountains of salt in Cumana, which, whilst they lay common for the good of many, never wasted, though merchants carried away in abundance; but when they were once engrossed to one man's use, they consumed away. He that hath greatest layings out for God, shall have greatest comings in from God. The loaves increased not whilst they were whole in the basket, but whilst they were breaking and distributing to others. Women's milk increaseth by drawing; if the breast be not drawn, it will dry up. He that soweth liberally, shall reap liberally. Believe it, friend, the only way to make thy one pound ten pounds, is by trading with it. I speak not of thy intruding into the minister's calling, but of dealing faithfully with the souls of thy friends and relations in thy place and calling.

Truly one would think that every time thou considerest the dreadful danger of poor sinners, thine heart should almost bleed within thee! Jesus Christ groaned and wept for dead Lazarus. How did David mourn for dead Absalom! At a funeral, though there be much cost, yet there is no cheer, because one is dead. What bowels of pity shouldst thou have towards them that are dead spiritually, nay, dying eternally! Dost thou not remember, there was a time when no eye pitied thee, when God passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood! yea, when thou wast in thy blood, he said unto thee, live; behold, that time was the time of love to thy soul. Canst thou now behold others wallowing in their pollutions, weltering in their soul blood, and thine eyes not affect thine heart with pity to them? Especially we that are parents should use all means for the regeneration of our children and relations: 'We have a little sister that hath no breasts, what shall we do for her?' said the Jews, Cant. viii. 8. Have not we little children that have no Christ, no hope, no grace? Oh what

shall we do for them in the day that they shall be spoken for? When Samson had found honey in the carcase of the lion, he did not only eat himself, but carried some to his father and mother; thou hast found honey and sweetness in the carcase of the lion of the tribe of Judah, in a crucified Christ, wilt thou not endeavour that thy relations and friends may share with thee?

Friend, canst thou think, without trembling, on the unnaturalness of most fathers and mothers towards their children? All their care is to get earth enough for them, but never mind the instating them in heaven; the ostrich leaves her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, where the foot crusheth them, and the wild beast breaks them, Job xxxix. 14, 15. Thus worldly men warm the fruit of their bodies in the earth, are diligent to leave them dust enough, but consider not that the foot of God's fury will crush them, and the roaring lion devour them, if they be not regenerated. Oh the many soul murders which worldly parents commit! But if thou art born again, I am persuaded, nay, I am confident, of better things of thee; thou darest not but teach thy sons God's ways, and labour that thy servants may be converted to him. Christianity doth not diminish, but rectify thy natural affection; it causeth thee to love thy relations, not less, but better than thou didst before. Grace makes thy love to run out towards their souls, and their spiritual and eternal good. Oh what an honour and privilege is it, that thou mayest be instrumental for the saving of souls, James v. 2, 20, which that thou mayest be, take these three words for thine help.

First, Be sure that thou set them a good pattern. Let thy life be so exact, that others may write after thy copy with credit. Look on thyself as new born for this end, that thou mightest adorn the doctrine of God thy Saviour. Parents and masters are often authentic patterns to all their inferiors; their zeal will provoke many, and if they fall, as tall cedars they beat down many shrubs. Oh, therefore, do nothing of which thou mayest not say to thy family and neighbours, as Gideon to his soldiers, 'Look on me, and do likewise,' Judges vii. 17. It is reported of the hares of Scythia, that they teach their young ones to leap from bank to bank, from rock to rock, by leaping before them, which otherwise they would never learn; and by this means, when they are hunted, no beast can overtake them. Do thou set others a pattern, in the performance of duties, and in the exercise of graces, that others learning by thine example, may thereby be secured from Satan, the great destroyer.

The moral is good of the fable. The old crab bid the young one

go forwards. Shew me the way, saith the young crab; the mother goeth backward and sideling, the daughter followeth her, saying, Lo, I go just as you do. Truly thus thy little ones will quickly imitate thy doings. Be careful, therefore, how thou livest; walk circumspectly, consider of every expression and action, not only whether it be lawful, but also whether it be expedient and exemplary.

Thy religious pattern may do more good than the minister's preaching; they preach with their lips one day in a week, but thou by thy life preachest all the week long, 1 Pet. ii. 12. Have thy conversation honest among others, that they may glorify God in the day of their visitation, 1 Pet. ii. 12.

Secondly, Let thy prayers be constant and instant for their regeneration. How can I see the death of my child? said Hagar. Alas! how canst thou see the eternal death of thy dear children? When thou kneelest to prayer with thy wife, children, and servants, and considerest that death will shortly break up thy house, and then heaven and hell will claim their due; the regenerate shall go to heaven, the unregenerate to hell; thou and they, who live together, are likely to be parted asunder for ever; good Lord, how shouldst thou pray for them! with what fervency, with what importunity! Thou art new born, and knowest that hell and heaven are no jesting matters; doth not thine heart ache to think that any of thine should dwell in everlasting burnings? oh go to Christ, as the centurion for his sick child, 'Sir, come down ere my child die,' John iv. 49. Lord, come down ere my poor children die for ever. And as the woman of Canaan, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; Lord, help me. If thou canst do any thing, help me.' Lord, pity poor children, and form thy dear Son in them. Thus carry thy little children to Jesus Christ, and entreat him to put his hands on them, and bless them. Hannah by prayer obtained a Samuel; oh let us pray hard that all our sons may be as gracious as Samuel, and all our daughters as full of good works as Dorcas. Xenophon said he never prayed that his son might live long, but that he might live well. Augustine was a child of many prayers, and did not perish.

Thirdly, Do thine endeavour to regenerate them, by instructing them in the precepts of God. David and Bathsheba were often dropping instruction into their son Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; Prov. iv. 3–10. Pious education hath made a happy renovation in several souls: 'Teach a child the trade in his youth, and he shall not depart from it when he is old,' Prov. xxii. 6. Others teach

their children to lie and steal, and to curse and swear. I have read a story of a wicked mother, that persuaded her daughter to yield to the lust of a rich man, in hope that he would marry her; the daughter did yield, but quickly after fell sick and died; the mother hereupon fell distracted, and cried out often, O my daughter's soul, O my daughter's soul! I have murdered my daughter's soul. If others entice their relations to uncleanness, shall not we encourage ours to holiness! Whilst this world lasteth the devil will have servants; many, many fathers bring up their children to his hand. Oh wilt not thou endeavour that, when thou art dead, thy little ones may be a generation arising to praise God! Truly thy love to God must needs oblige thee to do thine utmost, that his vast perfections and infinite excellencies may be declared and admired throughout all generations.

Melanchthon, on a day of prayer, went out a little from his company very sorrowful, and returned in a short time to them very joyful; of which Luther asking him the reason, he gave this account, That there were young captains training up, for he had heard many children learning and repeating their sound catechism, which would defend the cause of Christ. The good man was extremely cheered, that though the pope and emperor sought to undermine the true religion, yet young children were learning to defend it. Sure I am, thou wilt die with the more comfort, if thou canst have hopes that after thy decease the blessed God shall be exalted, and his gospel propagated in the place where thou dost dwell. And oh what a glorious heaven upon earth will thy house be, if the gracious God shall so prosper thy pattern, prayers, and precepts, that, as thou, like the sun, so thy wife like the moon, and thy children and servants like the stars, may all shine and sparkle with the light and heat of real holiness!

To end all, look on thy children, servants, and neighbours as passengers in a boat, and do thou with thy fellow-converts row hard, make use of all winds, improve every opportunity to land them all safely at the haven of heaven.

Soli Deo Gloria.

THE SINNER'S LAST SENTENCE.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Carnarvon, Lord Dormer, Viscount Ascot, Baron of Wing, &c.

May it please your Lordship, for so mean a thing as I am to address myself to a personage of your honour and quality may cause wonder in others, and abashment in myself, but for some considerations which may give them satisfaction, and me boldness and encouragement.

What I now present your Honour is a poor widow's mite; such as, being cast into the treasury of God's temple, may contribute something to repair the breaches of collapsed piety, and such as, I hope, the Lord of lords will not despise.

Do I call it mine? I must correct myself, it is indeed your Honour's, and my tendering it to your acceptance is but my paying you your own: it is a legacy left you by my dear deceased husband, who commanded me on his deathbed, in all humble wise, to present it to your Honour, and publish it under your protection; so that, although it was left with me, it was left by him for your Honour.

Do I call it a legacy? I must again correct, and confess it is a due debt; for our poor family stands most deeply obliged to your Honour, who have been pleased to exercise a generous bounty towards us, and such as is suitable to none but a noble mind.

The debt is humbly acknowledged by us, and shall be undoubtedly repaid by the Lord, to whom it was lent. Your Lordship may with comfort read the specialty in God's own word, Prov. xix. 17, which is very good security. But as for us, alas! what have we to return, except these gleanings of the fruits of my dear husband's labours, even some of those which were brought forth when he last laboured in the Lord's vineyard?

I desire for ever to adore the goodness of God towards me, whose weak condition seemed to cry, like that woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, 'Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord,' &c., 2 Kings iv. 1. To which cry your Lordship's overflowing munificence hath answered very like the man of God, ver. 7, 'Go, and sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.'

As for the matter of this discourse, it is not proper for me to reflect thereon. Only I have a good confidence, that, as your Honour hath been pleased to cast a favourable eye on other of my husband's works, professing profit and pleasure in the reading of them; so these words of your dying servant will not be unsuccessful, but have the like good acceptance, and leave the like impressions in your noble breast.

Nor will it, I hope, be interpreted base flattery what is here expressed, barely in token of sincere gratitude and due resentment of your Lordship's favours. But if the world shall be so disingenious, I shall cease from speaking before men, and direct my supplications to the most high God.

May the Lord of heaven prosper your Honour in the ample inheritance of your fathers; may it blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; 'the glory of Lebanon be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon,' Isa. xxxv. 2. May your Honour on earth be daily increased, as of those who did worthily in Ephrata, and were famous in Bethlehem, Ruth iv. 11; and let your house be like the house of Pharez. Nay, lastly and lastingly, as the crowning mercy of all, the special favour of the King of heaven be placed upon you, to be your sun and shield, to give you grace and glory, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. In all respects blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living, and to the dead, Ruth ii. 20. So humbly and heartily prayeth,

My Lord, your Honour's most obliged and thankful servant,

JOANNA SWINNOCK.

TO THE READER.

Good Reader,—Being requested to recommend this treatise to thy acceptance, I readily complied with the motion, induced thereunto partly by my respect to the author, Mr Swinnock, a name well known to most serious Christians by his former savoury and useful works, published for the good of the church, before one of which I have expressed my just esteem of his gifts and graces in an epistle prefixed, and therefore commendation is not my business now, it needeth not but attestation; and to assure thee that this piece is his, delivered by his own hands to his son, a little before his, to him blessed, but, alas! to us untimely death,[1] and accordingly thou wilt find the one spirit of the author in it, and the same holy, lively way of discoursing, which is so remarkable in his other writings, partly with respect to the matter, which is about the eternal recompenses, as they are represented by our Lord in a scheme or draught of the last judgment. We are hedged within the compass of our duty both on the right hand and on the left; on the right hand, with the hopes of a most blessed everlasting estate; on the left, with the fears of endless and never-ceasing torments. Reflections on the former are comfortable; what is sweeter than to live in the expectation and foresight of endless glory? But the consideration of the latter is also profitable. We need many sermons about hell, to keep us out of hell; therefore in this treatise the worthy author insisteth on the dreadful doom and sentence that shall pass on the wicked at the last day.

There is also another thing largely represented which is of great use, the heinousness of sins of omission. Sin in the general is a transgression of the law, 1 John iii. 4. Now the law may be transgressed either by omitting what is commanded as a duty to God, or by committing what is forbidden when we directly trans-

[1] He died Nov. 10, 1673, in the 46th year of his age.

gress an affirmative precept, that is a sin of omission; but when we do anything against a negative precept, that is a sin of commission; in both there is disobedience, and so by consequence contempt of God's authorities. When Saul had not done what God bids him to do, he telleth him that rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry, 1 Sam. xv. 13; implying that omission to be rebellion and stubbornness, for which God would rend the kingdom from him. So for a sin of omission he put by Eli's family from the priesthood, 1 Sam. iii. 15: 'I will judge his house for ever, because his sons had made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.' Now the more necessary the duties omitted are, the greater is the sin, as Heb. ii. 3, especially if the omission be total, Ps. xiv. 3; Jer. ii. 32; or when the duty is most seasonable, Prov. xvii. 16; or the performance easy, for this is to stand with God for a trifle; he is denied a drop that would not give a crumb, Luke xvi. 24; or when we are fully convinced that it is our duty, James iv. 17. Briefly, these sins of omission are the ruin of most people in the world; yea, the children of God oftener offend in these kind of sins than in fouler excesses. Oh, how many of them go out of the world bewailing their neglects and omissions. The best might have done much more for God than ever they have yet done. But I detain thee too long from the book itself; read and peruse it, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. —I am,

Thine in all Christian observation,

Tho. Manton, D.D.

THE SINNER'S LAST SENTENCE.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.—MAT. xxv. 41, 42.

CHAPTER I.

The preface and introduction to the text.

THOUGH the wise God is pleased now and then to keep a petty sessions at this day, and to execute vengeance on some sinners, lest men should question his providence, and but on some, lest they should question his patience; yet the great assize, when justice shall have a solemn, public, and general triumph, will be the last day. This world is the theatre whereon mercy is acting its part every moment: if justice peep out a little, as the sun out of a cloud, it is quickly recalled and hidden again; it will not appear in its full beauty, and glory, and brightness, till all nations appear in the other world. Here all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sweareth, and to him that feareth an oath, Eccles. ix. 2. The sun of prosperity shineth, and the showers of adversity fall on both promiscuously. If there be any difference for the better, it is commonly on the worser side, Psalm lxxiii. 3–8. But there when the last trump shall sound, the living be changed, the dead raised, and all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ; when the saints shall be called, honoured, acquitted, and rewarded; when the sinner shall be arraigned, accused, condemned,

and executed; when the judge shall say to the saints on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' and to the sinners on his left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;' then men will see and say, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God that judgeth in the world;' then men shall return and discern a difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

In relation to this great and general judgment, we may consider:

1. The efficient or judge: ver. 31, 'The Son of man shall come in his glory, with all his holy angels, and shall sit on the throne of his glory.' He that was judged by man, shall be judge of men.

2. The subject or persons to be judged, all the world: ver. 32, 'And before him shall be gathered all nations.' The congregation of the whole world together shall follow upon the sound of the trumpet. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, (for the trumpet shall sound,) the dead, indefinitely, shall be raised, 1 Cor. xv. 52. Some understand the sound of the trumpet metaphorically, for the virtue and power of Christ, whereby he shall cite and cause all the world to appear before him. Others take it literally and properly, as God appeared on mount Sinai, when he gave the law with the long and loud sound of a trumpet, Exod. xix. 19. So he will appear at the great day with the sound of a trump, when he comes to reckon with men for the breach of the law: Mat. xxiv. 31, 'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.' The Jews gathered their solemn assemblies together with the sound of a trumpet.

And God will gather the greatest assembly of men that ever was with the sound of a trumpet. Adam shall then see all his children to the hundredth, and thousandth, and hundred thousandth generation.

3. The form or proceeding at that day, from ver. 32 to the end.

4. The event or execution of the sentence, ver. 1. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, (as Haman's face was covered when the sentence was given, and presently led forth to execution,) and the righteous into life eternal.

About the form or proceeds of this day, wherein the text lieth, these four particulars are observable:

1. The separation of persons.
2. The setting them in their places.
3. The manifestation of persons and things.

4. The pronunciation of the sentence.

1. The separation of persons. Now the tares and wheat grow together, but then they shall be parted asunder: ver. 32, 'And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth his sheep from the goats.' Here they mingle together in the same house, and family, and society, but there the devil's herd of goats shall be by themselves, and Christ's flock by themselves. The wicked shall be gathered together, and he shall bind them in bundles, Mat. xiii. 41, and the godly gathered together. The sinner shall have his desire, not to be troubled with admonitions or singularity of the precise; and the saint shall have his prayer, not to be vexed with the filthy conversation of the profane, Ps. xxvi. 4–7, 'I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked,' &c.

2. The setting them in their places. Now the vilest men are exalted, and the most virtuous debased, but then it shall be otherwise. And then he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on the left, ver. 33. Here the godly are set in low places, on footstools, the wicked in high places, on thrones; but there the godly shall be honoured, and the wicked disgraced. The right hand is a place of the greatest honour. To sit at a king's right hand is the highest seat next him. To sit on king Solomon's right hand was the honour he gave his mother, 1 Kings ii. 19. To sit at the right hand of God is peculiar to Christ, whom he hath honoured and exalted above principalities and powers: 'To which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand? Eph. xx. 21; Heb. i. 13. And to sit on the right hand of Christ will be the honour of his spouse, his queen: 'At thy right hand was the queen in gold of Ophir,' Ps. xlv. 9. They who are now placed at the left hand of earthly princes, will then be placed at the right hand of the King of kings, of the blessed and glorious potentate; and they who are now placed at kings' right hands, will be placed at Christ's left hand.

3. The manifestation of persons and things:

(1.) Of persons.

[1.] Of men. All men shall then be pellucid and transparent as crystal. 'We must all appear, *τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ*: 2 Cor. v. 10, 'For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,' *φανερωθῆναι*. The word signifieth a clear and a permanent manifestation. Such a clear manifestation of men, that

every one may see into them, what they are, and what they have been; and such a permanent manifestation as will last for ever, according to the Greek scholiast on 1 Tim. iii. 18. Good men shall then be manifested; their principles, their practices, their designs and purposes, and their uprightness in all, to their glory and praise. They who are now accused of hypocrisy, and obstinacy, and pride, and peevishness, because they could not swim with the stream, nor run with others to the same excess of riot, will then be manifested to be men of integrity and humility, and to have declined the profane courses of others, not out of foolish preciseness, or needless scrupulosity, or humoursomeness, but out of conscience to the commands of God. Their faith, and love, and sincerity, will be found to their praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus: 'When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye appear with him in glory,' 1 Pet. i. 7. They who are now despised, and reproached, and trampled on as the dirt and dung and filth of the earth, will then be manifested to be God's jewels, Christ's glory, and the temples of the Holy Ghost: 'When Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory,' Col. iii. 4. Then there will be a manifestation of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 19.

Bad men will then be manifested to be the servants of unrighteousness, the children of the devil, the slaves and vassals of corruption, and notwithstanding all their glorious profession, and specious pretences, to have been but as a painted sepulchre, gaudy without, and rottenness within; or as a curious chimney-piece, without white and shining, but within full of soot and blackness: 'He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the thoughts of the heart.'

[2.] Of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read of the appearing of Christ at that day, 1 Pet. i. 7; Col. iii. 4. He was veiled, and hid, and obscured, when on earth, but then he shall be revealed and discovered to the whole world: 'When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,' 2 Thes. i. 7. And it will be a glorious revelation: 'Looking for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ,' Titus ii. 13.

In this world he appeared as the Son of man, as one born of a woman, and in the form of a servant; but then he shall appear as the Son of God, as the only begotten of the Father, and as the head of principalities and powers, and as the heir of all things: Mat. xvi. 27, 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then he shall reward every man according to

his works.' He shall come in the glory of his Father, *i.e.*, in that glory and honour which is proper and peculiar to the divine nature.

At his first appearing a weak mortal man was his harbinger, to prepare his way before him, Mat. iii. 3, 4; but at his second appearing, a mighty immortal archangel shall be his forerunner, and go before him: 'For the Lord himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,' 1 Thes. iv. 16. At his first appearing he was accompanied with a few poor, mean fishermen, but at his second appearing he shall be attended with his mighty angels, 2 Thes. i. 7; with all his holy angels, Mat. vi. 27; with the thousand thousand that are before him, and the ten thousand times ten thousand that minister to him.

At his first appearing he came as a servant to minister unto others, and to be abased: he came riding upon an ass, Mat. xxi. 5, and xxviii. But at his second appearing he shall come in the clouds of heaven as his chariot, Mat. xxvi. 61, to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. And then he shall appear as a Lord; some think it is therefore called the Lord's-day, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

At his first appearing he appeared wholly as a Saviour and Redeemer. When he appeared to the world, the philanthropy, or kindness of God to man appeared, Titus iii. 4: 'And the grace of God that bringeth salvation appeared,' Titus ii. 11. But then he shall appear as a judge, full of fire, and fury, and wrath against his enemies. The kings, and captains, and nobles will call to the rocks to fall on them, and to the mountains to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, when that great day of his wrath is come, Rev. vi. 16, 17.

At first he appeared as a sinner, in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3; he was numbered among the transgressors; the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, Isa. liii. 12. He was called a Samaritan, and one that had a devil, John x.; a wine-bibber and a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners, John viii. 48; Mat. xi. 19; a traitor against Cæsar, John xix. 12; one guilty of blasphemy against God, Mat. xxvi. 65; a conjuror, and one in compact and covenant with the devil, Mat. xii. 24. But his second appearing will be without any such likeness of sinful flesh, or imputation of sin by God, or reputation of a sinner among men: 'But unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation,' Heb. ix. 28.

(2.) There will be at that day a manifestation of things. The books that are now sealed up will then be opened, Rev. xx. 12.

The book of the divine decrees will then be unclasped, and the names written in the Lamb's book of life will then be visible and legible to all: 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life,' Rev. xx. 12. All the divine providences in time will be manifest; then will the divine purpose from eternity, as now the divine purpose is manifest by the divine providence.

The book of divine providences will then be opened, and all the rare curious contrivances thereof unfolded; the agreement of providence with the promises, as well as with the eternal purpose, will then be apparent. The history of the whole world will then be read by the saints in one entire volume. Now we see a little of God's wisdom, and power, and faithfulness, in one providence, and a little in another, and a little in a third; yea, we are so blind, and providences often so dark, that, through our ignorance and unbelief, God loseth much of the glory due to him for them, and we much of the comfort we might receive by them; but then we shall with strengthened and enlarged understandings discern the whole series, method, and contexture of divine providences together, and how by a powerful, wise, gracious government, all things conspired, and combined, and wrought together for our everlasting good, Rom. viii. 28. It is one thing to see a rich piece of arras, with a curious story wrought in it, by parcels and pieces, and another thing to see it all together, hung up, and to be seen all at once with one view.

The book of conscience will then be opened. Though now wicked men blot and blur this book by their wilful presumptuous sins, that they cannot read it; though they darken their eyes, and stiffen their wills, and harden their hearts, and will not read it; yet then they shall have the book of conscience representing to them in large, though black, yea, bloody characters, all their atheistical impieties, enormities, drunkenness, revellings, debaucheries, hypocrisies, blasphemies, and they shall be forced to read them with sorrow and terror, whether they will or no.

CHAPTER II.

The division and brief explication of,

4. The pronunciation of the sentence, ver. 41–43, &c.

In which we may take notice,

1. Of the persons sentenced; these are described,

(1.) By their station, on the left hand: 'Then shall he say to them on the left hand.'

(2.) By their condition, cursed ones: 'Depart, ye cursed.

2. Of their punishment. In which there is,

(1.) Pain of loss: 'Depart from me.'

(2.) Pain of sense, which punishment is aggravated,

First, By its extremity, fire. This is amplified,

1. By their companions in those flames, the devil and his angels.

2. By the divine ordination of it for them: 'Prepared for the devil and his angels.'

Secondly, By its eternity, everlasting fire.

3. Of the reason of this punishment: 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,' ver. 42, 43.

I shall begin with the sentence, wherein every word speaks woe and wrath, fire and fury, death and damnation; and every syllable speaks the deepest sorrow and dreadfullest sufferings. It is like Ezekiel's roll, written within and without; and within is written lamentation, weeping, and woe, Ezek. ii. 10. The Lord Chief-Justice of the world, the judge of the quick and dead, is now in all his robes and royalty, with millions of glorious attendants, in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, set on the bench. The poor prisoner, whose trembling soul is newly reunited to the loathsome carcase of his body, is dragged to the bar, awaiting and expecting some doleful doom. He is lately come from hell, to give an account of his life on earth, and to receive his sentence; and loath he is to go back to that place of torments, as knowing that the pain of his body will be a new and grievous addition to his misery, when that shall burn in flames as his soul doth already in fury. Therefore he pleads:

Prisoner. Lord, let me stay here, (though, poor wretch, he hath his hell about him in his accusing, affrighting conscience,) rather than go to that dungeon of darkness. A sight of thy beautiful face may possibly abate my sorrows, and thy presence may mitigate my sufferings.

Judge. No, saith Christ, here is no abiding for thee; be gone hence. Thou mayest remember when my presence was thy torment, when thou didst bid me depart from thee, choosing my room before my company. Now my absence shall be thy terror; I like thee not so well to have thee nigh me; depart, I say, from me.

Prisoner. Lord, if I must undergo so dreadful a doom as to

depart from thee, the Father of lights, and fountain of life, yet bless me before I go. One good wish of thy heart, one good word of thy mouth, will make me blessed wherever I go. Those whom thou blessest are blessed indeed. Bless me, even me, O my Father; at this parting grant me thy blessing.

Judge. Sinner, be gone, and my curse go along with thee. Thou hast many a time despised my blessing when it hath been offered to thee, though I was made a curse to purchase it for thee; therefore, I say, depart from me, and the curse of an angry Lord and of a righteous law accompany thee for ever; depart, I say, thou cursed.

Prisoner. Lord, if I must go, and thy curse with me, send me to some good place, where I may find somewhat to refresh me under thy loss and curse. It is misery enough to lose thy presence; good Lord, command me to some good place.

Judge. No, sinner, be gone with my curse to that place which will torture and rack thee with extremity and universality of pains. The time hath been that thou hast wallowed in sensual pleasures, now thou must fry in intolerable flames; depart, thou cursed, into fire.

Prisoner. Ah, Lord, if I must go with thy curse, and to so woeful a place as fire, I beseech thee let me not stay there long. Alas! who can abide devouring flames one moment? material fires of man's kindling are terrible, but how intolerable are those flames which thy breath, like a stream of brimstone, hath kindled! I beseech thee, if I must go to it, let me pass swiftly through it, and not stay in it.

Judge. No, sinner, depart and my curse with thee to those extreme torments that admit of no ease and no end, where the worm never dieth and the fire never goeth out; to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. Depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire.

Prisoner. Lord, this is dismal and dreadful indeed, to go from thee, who art all good, and to go to fire, which hath in it extremity of all evil, and to lose thee, and fry in flames for ever, ever, ever; yet, Lord, if it is thy will it should be so, hear me yet in one desire, let me have such society as may mitigate, at least such as may not aggravate my misery.

Judge. No, sinner, thy company must be such for ever as thou didst choose in thy lifetime. He who was thy tempter shall be thy tormentor; and they who led thee captive at their will, shall be bound with thee in chains of everlasting darkness, and

fagoted up with thee together for unquenchable fire. Such fiery serpents, gnawing worms, stinging adders, poisonous toads, roaring and devouring lions, hideous monsters, frightful fiends must be thy eternal companions. 'Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

I shall now speak particularly to the punishment of these wicked ones, and explain the words as I come to speak to them.

I begin with the beginning of Christ's sentence, viz., the pain of loss, which shall be the punishment of the damned: 'Depart from me.' The word depart is a metaphor which describes the course of human life by a journey,[1] Luke i. 6; 2 Peter ii. 10; and also their progress to death, Luke xiii. The eternal death of the damned will consist partly, if not principally, in their departure from the Lord of life.

But it may be objected, Who can depart from him who is everywhere? Christ is God, John i. 1; 1 John v. 20; and God is omnipresent: 'Whither shall I fly from thy presence?' Ps. cxxxix. 7. Therefore we must know there is a threefold presence of God or Christ:

1. There is the essential presence of God, as he is infinite in his being, included in no place, and excluded out of none, so none can depart from him, Ps. cxxxix. 6–10; Jer. xxiii. 24; Amos ix. 2, 3.

2. There is the favourable presence of God, as he is the fountain of life and love, and the Father of mercy and kindness, and all good. The former is the presence of his being, this of his bounty. This is as the presence of the sun by his heat cheering, and by his light delighting the creature. His presence in this sense is the substance of his promises: 'Fear not, I will be with thee,' Isa. xliii. 2, 3, 5; Jer. i. 8, and xv. 20; Luke i. 28; Acts xviii. 10. His presence in this sense is the Redeemer's purchase: 'He suffered the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,' 1 Peter iii. 18. Thence the name of the Redeemer is Immanuel, God with us, Mat. i. 23. Against his departure in this sense, Jer. xiv. 8, is the church's earnest prayer, Leave us not; and the fear of it doth so affect Moses, that he is ready to throw up all, Exod. xxxiii 15: 'If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.'

His presence in this sense is heaven itself: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore;' Luke xxii.; 1 Thes. iv. 17, 'Then we which are alive and

[1] Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, est metaphora qua vitæ humanæ cursus per iter sive profectionem describitur.

remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. This is that presence of Christ which the wicked shall want for ever. This is included in 'Depart from me.'

3. There is the afflicting punishing presence of God. There is the presence of his fury, as well as of his favour. In this sense Job prayeth for God's absence: 'How long wilt thou not depart from me?' Job vii. 19. Which Junius glosseth, Turn thine anger away from me. In this sense God tells men that he will visit them, *i.e.*, with judgments; as a father, beholding his child about some naughty action, tells him, I will be with you presently, meaning to correct him, Isa. xxiii. 17; Jer. vi. 15, 'At the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.' In this sense wicked men shall have the presence of God for ever. His tormenting presence, as well as the absence of his grace and favour, will be their eternal portion. And certainly, if his afflicting presence in this world, which hath love for its original, and their good for its end, be so grievous to his own people, that they cry out, Let him turn from me, Job xiv. 6; let him depart away; what will his tormenting presence be to the wicked in the other world, of which wrath, pure wrath, is the original, and satisfaction to justice his end?

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the privative part of the sinner's punishment.

This part of the verse will afford this doctrine:

Doct. That a great part of wicked men's punishment in the other world will consist in their departure from the presence of Christ. 'Then shall he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me.' They now bid God depart from them; they say unto God, 'Depart from us,' Job xxi. 14. But that which is their wish here shall be their woe for ever. And he shall say unto them, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23. The presence of Christ is now their trouble, but his absence will then be their torment. Hence the state of the wicked in the other world is called utter darkness,[1] Mat. viii. 12; and blackness of darkness for ever, Jude 13; because of its separation from Christ, who is the light of the world and the Sun of righteousness,

[1] Calvin in Mat. viii. 12.

John i. 9; Mal. iv. 2. It seems an allusion to them that are fettered in dark doleful dungeons, or to those that in the night-time stand without in the dark, being excluded such rooms as are full of lights, wherein are rare and costly feasts.

In the explication of this doctrine, I shall describe the punishment of the wicked: 1. In the perfection of the object from which they must depart; 2. In the properties of their departure; and then give the reasons of the doctrine.

First, As for the object of their loss.

1. They lose the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the fairest of ten thousand, the only begotten of the Father, and the heir of all things. The better the object is, the greater their loss who are deprived of it. The more excellent the person of Christ is, the more exquisite their punishment will be who must depart from him. Christ is the highest, the greatest, the chiefest good. In losing him,

(1.) They depart from an universal good, one that is bread, water, light, life, rest, health, ease, wine, marrow, a feast, a friend, a father, pardon, peace, love, grace, glory, anything, everything, all things that the soul wanteth and requireth to its perfect felicity.

(2.) They depart from a suitable good, that very savoury meat which the soul loveth and needeth. They lose that good which the soul should have, and would have, and must have, if ever it be happy. The soul is guilty, and Christ is pardon; pardon is suitable to a guilty soul: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' The soul is poor, and Christ is riches; riches are suitable to a poor creature: Eph. iii. 8, 'The unsearchable riches of Christ;' Prov. viii. 18, 'Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness.' The soul is miserable, naked, filthy, obnoxious to death and wrath, but Christ is mercy, raiment, cleansing, freedom from hell, and the heaven of heaven, Rev. iii. 17, 18; 1 Thes. i. 10; Rom. viii. 1. He is a good that doth exactly, directly suit the condition of the soul, the miseries of the soul, and the necessities of the soul. He is the plaster that fits the sores, and the balm that hits the wounds of the soul, when creatures are physicians and physic of no value.

(3.) They depart from an eternal good; they lose that good which doth not only suit the soul's disposition, but also its duration, that will last, and abide, and continue for ever: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. He is everlasting right-

eousness, Dan. ix. 24; everlasting meat, John vi. 27; eternal life, 1 John v. 20.

2. They depart from, with Christ, the society of all Christians. When they depart from the head, they depart from the members; when they depart from the root, they depart from the branches. For head and members, root and branches, must be together for ever: John xiv. 2, 3, 'Where I am, there ye may be also.' Now the sheep and goats flock together, but then they shall be parted asunder: Mat. viii. 11, 12, 'And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' They who are now the objects of their contempt, will then be the objects of their envy. When once they lose the sight, they shall lose the sight of those glorious stars for ever. Every saint may then say to the sinner, who now frets and fumes at the saint's presence, because of his preciseness, as Moses to Pharoah, 'I will see thy face no more,' Mat. xxv. 46.

3. They shall depart, when from Christ, from all the means of grace, or communion with God. They shall hear no more sermons, and join in no more prayers, and receive no more tenders of grace, or entreaties of the gospel: Isa. xxxviii. 11, 'I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.' Where the king is, there he hath his secretaries, and seals, and ministers of state, and they who are banished the court are banished from these.

4. They shall depart from all the good things of this life. Each country hath its proper peculiar commodities, and so hath each world. This world hath its peculiar good things, such as are proper to this, and not to be found in the other world; therefore the apostle calls them this world's goods: 'He that hath this world's goods,' 1 John iii. 17. So the other world hath its proper peculiar commodities, such as are to be found nowhere else. The blessings of this are not to be looked for in the other life: 'There is neither marrying nor given in marriage, but all are as angels;' good men, as good angels, above all bodily and temporal blessings; and evil men, as evil angels, without them, and fixed in a state of endless misery. The wicked man possibly was honourable, but his glory doth not follow after him, Ps. xlix. 17. He was rich, but that was only in this world, 1 Tim. vi. 17. He was one that abounded in pleasures, but now they are gone, and exchanged for

pains, James v. 5; Luke xvi. 25, 'But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' The sinner shall bid adieu to temporal good, spiritual good, eternal good, all good, that he may speak indefinitely, what Job, supposing himself dying, spake restrictively, 'Mine eyes shall no more see good,' Job vii. 7.

CHAPTER IV.

The properties of the sinner's loss.

Secondly, I shall speak to the properties of this departure from Christ, or loss therein.

1. It is spiritual. It is a loss peculiar to the soul or spirit of man, and a loss of that good that is most suitable to the soul or spirit of man. No mercies are like soul-mercies, Eph. i. 3, and Job iv. 4; no miseries are like soul-miseries. For, the nobler any being is, the better that is which advantageth it, and the worse that is that injureth it. It is one thing to relieve or abuse a distressed prince, and another thing to relieve or abuse a distressed subject. The soul of man is the prince, the chief and noblest part of man, and it is principally the subject, as chiefly sensible of this departure. It is true the soul cannot depart from God locally, but it can and doth morally here in its affections and conversation. But that which is now its practice and pleasure, will then be their torment and punishment. Other losses pinch the flesh, but this pierceth the spirit. Other losses are castigatory, and the portion of children; but this is damnatory, and the portion of devils. Ah, how will the soul pine and wither away, when it shall take its farewell of that Sun, who alone could revive and refresh it! What a dismal, doleful death must it undergo, when it shall depart from him who is its only life! Such a wounded spirit who can bear? The soul hath more exquisite sense, and more curious feeling, than the body; therefore its loss of its own peculiar suitable satisfying good will cut deep, and fill it with bitter horror.

2. It will be a total departure. Here they depart in part from God, but then totally. Here Cain complains, if not allowed God's presence in ordinances, though he had his presence in many ways of ordinary favour: 'Behold, thou hast driven me this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid,' Gen. iv. 14.

But, alas! how doth he complain there, where he is wholly deprived of the divine presence in any way of favour; where he hath not the least glimpse of the light of his countenance. The partial departures of God have forced sad complaints from them that are godly: Job xiii. 24, 'Why hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?' saith Job. I can bear the withdrawings of men, and their absence; I can bear the strangeness of my friends, and the unkindness of relations, but I cannot bear thy strangeness to me, thy withdrawings from me. 'Why hidest thou thy face?' Job, though a strong stout man, able to overcome the strong one, the devil, yet was ready to faint away and die at this. David crieth out mournfully at it: Ps. x. 1, 'Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in time of trouble?' Poor Heman is distracted, and almost dead with it: Ps. lxxxviii. 14, 15, 'Lord, why hidest thou thy face? I am afflicted and ready to die; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.' If these partial departures, which had much love in them and with them, cast down the friends of God so heavily, oh what will his total departures out of pure wrath cause to his enemies? That world must needs be dolesome and darksome indeed, to whom this Sun is wholly set, and totally eclipsed.

3. It will be an eternal departure. They must leave God for ever. Though it had been spiritual and total, yet if but temporal, there had been somewhat to have allayed their sorrows; but to suffer so great a loss, and that wholly and for ever too, must needs pierce to the quick. The sinner shall see the blessed Jesus no more for ever. He must depart from the tenderest father, lovingest friendship, richest treasure, choicest good, greatest glory, sweetest pleasure, and that for ever: Jude 13, 'To whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever.' The sentence once denounced, 'Depart from me,' will be like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered: 2 Thes. i. 8, 9, 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' The anchor of hope will then be broken, the bridge of grace will then be drawn, the gate of mercy will then be shut, and the gulf between Christ and the wicked never to be passed over. They may cry out in truth, what the psalmist in unbelief, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever?' Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8. Alas! they are cast off for ever; he will be favourable to them no more. They may roar out in vain, How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? shall I never be remembered? Ps. xiii. 1.

4. It is an irreparable loss, such a loss as nothing can make up.

There are many good things which we may do well without, because the want of them may be supplied by other things; but Christ is the one thing necessary, the one thing excellent, the want of whom no good thing in heaven or earth can make up. When the soul departs from Christ it departs from all good, because nothing is good without him, and nothing can be had in the room of him. If some kind of food be wanting, another kind may possibly do as well; so if some sort of drugs or herbs for physic be wanting, there may be others found of the same virtue and operation; but if once the soul be sentenced to depart from Christ, there is nothing to compensate this loss. He is the Saviour, and indeed the only Saviour, Acts iv. 12; he is the mediator between a righteous God and a guilty creature, and indeed the only mediator: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

CHAPTER V.

The reasons of the sinner's privative punishment.

Thirdly, I proceed to the reasons of this doctrine, and shall name but two.

1. Wicked men in the other world shall be sentenced to depart from Christ, because of their wickedness or unworthiness of his presence. The judge himself gives this reason in the text: ver. 42, 43, 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c. Sin is the great wall of partition between God and his creatures: 'Evil cannot stand in thy sight, neither canst thou behold the works of iniquity,' Ps. v. 5. They must lose the light of his countenance, who never minded the light of his commandments; the holy Jesus cannot abide the company of unholy creatures: 'Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?' No, it may not, it cannot, Ps. xciv. 20. It is contrary to his honour, who hath threatened their banishment from him; and it is contrary to his nature, who hates their company.

If God depart from his own people in this world in part, and for a time, it is for their sins. 'Your iniquities separate between me and your souls,' Isa. lix. 2; thus they are the cloud that interpose between the soul and the Sun of righteousness, and hinder the light of his favour from shining on us, Isa. xliv. 22. Job knew and acknowledged this: chap. xiii. 24–26, 'Why hidest thou thy face?

Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth.' And if wicked men depart totally and eternally from God in the other world, it is for their sins: 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 27. Departure from Christ is the wages which the workers of iniquity earn. Deeds of darkness merit utter darkness.

Wicked men now desire Christ to depart from them: 'They besought him to depart out of their coasts,' Mat. viii. 34; but what is now their pleasure, shall then be their punishment. He will go from them, who bid him be gone; and hide his face for ever from those who turn their backs upon him in time. He that prepares for sinners the torments of hell, will not bestow on them the joys of heaven.

2. Because of their unfitness for the presence of Christ. A carnal heart cannot savour a spiritual heaven. The vitiated nature of man cares not for the pleasures joined with the holiness of the celestial paradise: 'When angels kept not their first estate, they left their own habitation, Jude 6. As soon as they lost their primitive purity, they lost the place of their glory and felicity. When once they turned haters of God and holiness, of their own accord they forsook heaven. Distempered palates cannot relish the choicest dainties. How can the wicked delight in God, which is the heaven of heaven, who have in them a predominant enmity against him: Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' It is holiness that makes the soul fit and meet for heaven: Col. i. 12, 'Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' The blind are as capable of seeing, and the deaf of hearing, and the dead of eating and drinking, as wicked men are of seeing God as he is, and hearing the melodious songs of saints and angels, and of feeding of the tree of life that groweth in the midst of paradise, and of drinking of the pure water that floweth from the throne of God and the Lamb. If the tabernacle on earth, wherein are the saints of God, and holy institutions of Christ, and the divine worship, for four or five hours in a week, be a prison to earthly, carnal men, surely the temple in heaven, wherein is the Holy One of Israel in the greatest manifestation of his holiness, holy angels, perfect spirits, pure service of the blessed God, without interruption or cessation, would be a purgatory, yea, a hell to them. Communion with God is impossible (*in natura rei*) without conformity to him, 2 Cor. vi. 14. They tell a broad lie who say, they have fellowship with God here, and walk after their own lusts, 1 John

i. 6. 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' Our delight in God is ever proportionable to our desires of him. Now wicked men desiring above all things the absence, yea, the dethroning of God, can never take any delight in his presence, though they should be admitted thereunto.

If suitableness be wanting, that which is never so excellent is no way joyous or pleasant to us. All creatures delight only in what is suitable to their natures. Barzillai refused the pleasures of David's court, because they were so unsuitable to an old man that they would be no pleasures to him; he could not taste their meat, nor hear their music. So all the delights of the celestial court would be no delights, because of their unsuitableness to sinful sensual natures. Ungodly men could not relish the spiritual dainties at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, nor hear with pleasure the heavenly choir singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. I grant that wicked men are naturally capable of heaven, as they are rational creatures, but they are morally incapable, as they are predominantly carnal and sinful; so they want that holiness which should prepare, and dispose, and fit them for heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

Uses concerning the heinous nature of sin, and grievous misery of sinners.

Use. I shall now apply this doctrine. It may be useful by way of information, and by way of exhortation. 1. By way of information.

1. It may inform us, if the wicked in the other world shall be banished the presence of Christ, then how heinous is the nature of sin, and how odious to God! God is love itself, and delights in mercy, yea, takes pleasure in the prosperity of men: John i. 4, 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men;' Micah vii. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.' Therefore it must be some grievous crime, and somewhat which is very offensive to him, that provokes him to sentence them to an eternal banishment from him. Oh how horrid a thing is sin! it brings all evil, Rom. ii. 7, 8, and deprives of all good, Isa. lix. 2. Its formal nature is a voluntary departure from God's precepts, Heb. iii.

12; Jer. ii. 5; and its woeful effect is an eternal total departure from his gracious presence. His partial temporary departure from his own people, who are the objects of his eternal choice and infinite love, 'which makes them go mourning all the day, and lie roaring all the night, because of their sins,' speaks much of the evil of sin; but his full everlasting departure from others, which leaves them naked, and stripped of all comfort, and exposed to all misery and mischief, doth more abundantly proclaim its filthiness and loathsomeness. It can be no ordinary cloud or vapour that can obscure the sun at noonday, in all his beauty and brightness, and turn the clear day into a black night; and it can be no little or small thing which provokes the Father of mercy, and God of all grace, to deal so severely with the works of his own hands.

2. It informs us of the inconceivable misery of sinners; they must depart from Christ for ever. To depart for ever from loving and lovely relations, is no mean misery to them who have no other kindred than those on earth. It was no small trial of Abraham to leave his kindred and father's house, Gen. xii. 1. To depart for ever from dear and intimate friends is a sore trouble to him whose heart is knit to them. The failure and distance of friends was grievous to Job, chap. xix. 13, 14; and David, Ps. xxxviii. 11. To depart for ever from all the saints, the children of the Most High, the excellent of the earth, from the members of Christ, of whom the world is not worthy, will cut deep in them who have any eyes to see the amiableness of their persons, and any hearts to understand the benefit of their prayers and patterns; but to depart for ever from Christ, the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the heir of all things, the richest treasure, and highest honour, and sweetest pleasure, is doleful and dreadful indeed. How may the damned cry out, Ah whither do we go now! we are going from thee; thou hast the words of eternal life.

The presence of Christ is the happiness of the soul on earth: Deut. iv. 7. 'I will see you, and your hearts shall rejoice.' John xvi. 22, 'And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' No such hearty comfort as in the gracious presence of Christ; and the presence of Christ is the happiness of the soul in heaven. 'I desire to be dissolved,' though death simply considered be not desirable, 'and to be with Christ.' *Finis conciliat mediis amorem.* His presence is the heaven of heavens. It is the excellency of the New Jerusalem, that there the tabernacle of God is with men, and God himself shall be with them, Rev. xxi. 3. And

the felicity of the citizens there, 'They shall see his face,' Rev. xxii. 4. In the presence of Christ is all good, and in the absence of Christ is all evil. If it were death to Absalom not to see the king's face, what death will it be to the damned to be denied for ever the blissful sight of the face of Christ!

If God depart from his people in some degrees, for he is their God still, Ps. xxii. 1, and lxxxviii. 1, and but for a time, as a loving father, to make his children more sensible of their folly, and of the worth of his favour, how sadly have they cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' How horribly will they screech and roar from whom he departs wholly and eternally, as a supreme and righteous judge.

It will greatly aggravate their misery to consider these particulars:

1. The greatness of their loss. It is not the loss of a house, or estate, or bodily good, but the loss of a soul, the loss of a Saviour, the loss of a God, yea, the loss of all good, and that for ever. It is such a loss as never had its fellow or equal; it is such a loss as cannot admit of any addition to it. It is a loss that never had the like before it, nor shall have the like after it. It is an incomparable loss, that the damned may say as he, 'Ye have taken away my God, and what have I more?'

2. For how small a thing they lose the blessed Jesus. If they had lost Christ for somewhat which might have countervailed the want of him, or had in any degree equalled him, it had been the better; but to lose a God, a Christ, a soul, fulness of joy, for a little airy honour, or brutish pleasure, this will cut to the heart. Oh how will it wound the soul in the other world to think, for how small a toy, for how pitiful a trifle, have I lost a crown of glory, and rivers of pleasures for ever! Ah, what a fool have I been to lose substance for shadows, bread for husks, a fountain of living waters for broken cisterns, their own mercies for lying vanities, crystal streams for puddle water, the choice dainties of God's house for the devil's scraps, heaven for earth, and all things for nothing! Was any in bedlam ever half so distracted!

3. It will much aggravate their misery to consider that it was their own voluntary act to lose so much for so little. They shall then think with themselves, that this woeful condition in which they are was their own choice. All the power and policy of earth and hell could not force them to destroy themselves. The cords that bind them were of their own twisting; the rods that scourge them were gathered with their own hands; the web in which they

are caught and killed was spun out of their own bowels. God may say to them, as once to Israel, 'Ye have destroyed yourselves,' Hosea xiii.; ye are your own murderers. I put your salvation so far into your own hands, that ye could not be damned against your wills. Your own iniquities correct you, and ye are holden with cords of your own sins, Prov. v. 22; Jer. iv. 18. Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart. Jer. ii. 19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.'

4. It will exceedingly increase their anguish, to know perfectly the greatness of their loss. Here they know not the worth of a Christ, and thence they are little troubled at the want of Christ; but then their eyes shall be opened to see the beauty, excellency and amiableness of him whom they have lost, and to see the costly delicacies, choice dainties, pure and perfect pleasures which the godly enjoy in him, and with him; and so by the increase of their knowledge will be an increase of their sorrow. They shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; they shall see their neighbours, whom they scorned and mocked for their purity and preciseness, in the presence of Christ, in the arms and embraces of Christ, in a state of full happiness and perfect satisfaction, while they themselves are shut out, and denied entrance, Luke xiii. 25, 28. The fire of hell will give them light enough to see, as well as heat enough to feel, themselves infinitely miserable.

5. It will greatly add to their torment and anguish to consider, that they were sometime near the enjoyment of this blissful presence of Christ. Pardon, and peace, and love, and life, and the endless fruition of the blessed Jesus were tendered to them, were nigh them, were at the very door of their hearts. They were solemnly commanded, lovingly invited, severely threatened, sweetly allured, and pathetically persuaded to accept of Christ and grace; yea, and heaven, and happiness, and eternal life; yea, and their hearts began to relent, and to close with the entreaties of the gospel. They were almost persuaded to be Christians indeed; there was but a little, a very little, between them and Christ. The bargain was driven so far that Christ was got into their consciences, they bore witness for him, and warned them, if they loved their lives, their souls, to accept of him while he would accept of them;

yea, Christ was got into their judgments, they gave their verdict on his side, as one infinitely more amiable and eligible than the world or flesh; nay, he had possibly got into their affections, they delighted to hear of his great love to poor sinners, and of the great things he purchased for them with his own blood; and yet though they were so near, they came short, and, like Ephraim, played the part of unwise sons, and stayed in the place of the breaking forth of children.

Oh how like a dagger will it pierce the heart of them that live under the gospel, and neglect the great salvation offered to them, when they come to be banished the presence of Christ, and to see others, who made religion their business on earth, bathing their souls in rivers of pleasures, drawing water with joy out of the well of salvation, eating of the tree of life that groweth in the midst of paradise, and housed in the arms of their dearest Saviour, and shall reflect and consider with themselves, all those joys and pleasures, all those dainties and delicacies, all those robes, and riches, and glories, and felicities, which they enjoy in the presence of Christ, might have been mine; they were freely, and frequently, and affectionately offered to me; I had the refusal of them; nay, I had a good mind to them, I was not far from the kingdom of heaven. There was but a little between me and them, they were at the very door of my heart, and stood knocking there for admission, and desired only hearty acceptance; but like a fool I dallied with them, and deferred them, as if hereafter had been time enough; and so have lost them for ever.

(6.) It will much augment their anguish and misery to consider who it is that passeth so severe a doom upon them. This dreadful sentence is pronounced by love, and grace, and goodness itself. He that sometimes called them to him so sweetly, so affectionately, now casts them from him so sharply, so furiously; he who sometimes cried to them, 'Come to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden,' and wept over them, 'Oh that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day, the things of thy peace;' he that formerly invited, entreated, besought them to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20, and shewed them his heart-blood, the price of their pardon and life, and stretched out his arms to embrace their returning souls, will now in wrath, and rage, and flames, and fury, bid them begone from him, and his curse go along with them. And if love prove their enemy, surely wrath will not be their friend; and if mercy be thus against them, surely justice will not be for them. Ah, how sorely will it gall the sinner to consider: this dreadful doom is denounced against me not by an enemy, or one that hated me, but by a friend and father, by

one that loved me, and took my nature on him, and suffered therein the law's curse, to render me capable of escaping these torments which I now suffer, and partaking of those pleasures which yonder blessed souls enjoy.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing the folly of sinners, and the vast difference between them and the godly at the great day.

3. It informeth us that every wicked man is out of his wits. Surely the man is mad who exchangeth his soul, and Saviour, and God, and all for a little worldly profit or fleshly pleasure; yea, that parts with true and durable riches for shadowy and fading treasure, that loseth heavenly and eternal joys for earthly and transitory pleasures.

No man can love sin, but he hates himself; nor part with his duty, but he parts with his felicity. And surely such a man who hates himself, and forsakes his happiness, is a madman. Well might the Holy Ghost speak the prodigal out of his wits when he was out of his way, and wandering from his father's house. How mad was he to forsake bread for husks! All the world is but husks, dry, coarse, empty fare, to the dainties of the gospel. Bread in a father's house for husks among swine; yea, and plenty of bread, enough and to spare, for a few husks that could not fill their bellies.

If one soul be more worth than a whole world, surely one Saviour, one God, is more worth than a thousand souls, than a million of worlds. How mad then is he that parts with this soul, this Saviour, this God, for a little, a very little, of this world; yea, for this little of the world for a very little time.

If all the delights of the flesh, and all the pleasures of sin, and all the profits of the world, cannot balance the partial enjoyment of God in his ordinances for one hour, how unable will they be to compensate the loss of full communion with God for ever? Oh how infinitely doth Christ outweigh whatever the flesh or world can offer in exchange for him!

4. It informeth how contrary the portion of the godly and the wicked is at the day of judgment. At this day they fare often alike, they fall under the same favourable and frowning providences, they have the same comforts and the same crosses. If any difference for the better, it is usually on the sinner's side. The vilest

men are exalted, and the proud prosper. But at that day there will be a difference indeed for the better on the saint's side. That day will be terrible to the wicked—a day of wrath, a day of the perdition of ungodly men, Rom. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 7. To the godly a day of redemption, a time of refreshing, a day of light and gladness, and a good day, Luke xxi. 28; Acts iii. 19, 'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

The difference between the godly and the wicked at that day will be vast:—

1. In regard of their station: 'Then shall he separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep at his right hand,' (in token of honour and favour,) 'and the goats on his left,' (as a sign of shame and contempt,) Mat. xxv. 32, 33. Those who are now uppermost, will then be undermost. The filth of the world will then appear to be God's jewels, and the darlings of the world will then appear to be the children of the devil: 'The righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning,' Ps. xlix. In the night of this world the wicked sit in high places, and have dominion over the godly; but in the morning of the world the godly shall sit at the right hand of Christ, and have dominion over the wicked.

2. In regard of the sentence. And indeed herein is the principal difference. God and the devil, light and darkness, heaven and hell, are not more contrary than the doom of the godly and wicked at the great day.

(1.) His voice to the wicked is, 'Depart from me;' and those words will wound to purpose. Ah, whither do they go that go from Christ! His voice to the godly, 'Come, come.' No honey to the taste, no music to the ears, no cordial to the heart, was ever so sweet as this word of Christ. His voice in the gospel, when he called out, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' was sweet and refreshing to them; but that was but as water to this wine: come, oh come, and welcome, into my arms and embraces. When they who had longed for his coming, and looked for his coming, Titus ii. 13, and loved dearly his coming, 2 Tim. iv. 8, and sighed and sobbed so often for his coming—'Why are his chariots so long a-coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste my beloved, and be thou like the hart and roe upon the mountain of spices'—and prayed so earnestly for his coming: 'The spirit and the bride say, Come,' Rev. xxii. 17. 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' ver. 20; for these to see him coming in

the clouds, with all his train of angels, and to hear him calling to them, Come to me, oh who can imagine the joy that will fill their hearts! If when they saw him coming with the prospective of faith, they rejoiced with joy unspeakable, how will they rejoice when they shall see him coming with the eye of sense, and hear him call to them to come to him.

(2.) His voice to the wicked will be, 'Depart from me, ye cursed.' Begone as a cursed brood, and my curse shall follow you wherever you go. His voice to the godly will be, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' Oh come, dear souls, whom my Father blessed in his eternal choice, to bless whom he sent me into the world, as a token of whose blessing he hath provided an everlasting inheritance for you. Come, ye blessed in your souls, blessed in your bodies, blessed in your names, blessed in your conditions, and thrice blessed in your eternal possessions.

(3.) His voice to the wicked will be, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' Begone from me to extremity of torments, fire; and eternity of torments, everlasting fire. His voice to the godly will be, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.' Ye have been heirs a long while under age, and kings in the lower world in disguise, the time is now come for you to enjoy your inheritance. Oh come, ye blessed ones, and inherit the kingdom as kings thereof. Enjoy your full glory, 2 Cor. vii. 17; perfect pleasure, Ps. xviii. 50; and vast dominion, 1 Cor. vi. 3: and Rev. ii. 26, 27, 'And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron,' &c. Ay, and enjoy this kingdom for ever, 'inherit the kingdom'; inheritances are for ever: 'The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be for ever,' Ps. xxxvii. 18.

(4.) His voice to the wicked will be, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Begone to that place of torment which infinite wisdom and wrath contrived, and infinite power and justice provideth for the devil and his cursed crew. Depart from me, and be their partners and companions in torments for ever. His voice to the godly will be, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Come, take possession of a crown, to which your heads were destined before ye were born. Oh come and partake of those pleasures and joys, of that glory and dignity, to which infinite love elected you, and which infinite wisdom, and goodness, and grace hath prepared for you.

Oh how vast will the difference be at that day between the servants of God and the servants of sin; when those shall weep, and howl, and wail, and gnash their teeth for envy and vexation, and shall call to the rocks to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, the servants of God shall sing and rejoice, and lift up their heads with joy, because the day of their redemption is come, Rev. vi. 16; Luke xxi. 28, 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.'

CHAPTER VIII.

A use of trial, with the marks of those that shall be banished Christ's presence.

Secondly, This doctrine may be useful by way of exhortation, and that two ways:

1. To try whether thou, reader, art one of them that are like to be banished the presence of Christ. It is a woeful doom, as thou hast heard at large; therefore examine thyself whether it shall be thy part and portion or no. To help thee herein, that thou mayest not deceive and delude thy own soul, I shall give thee, out of the word of truth, the characters of them to whom Christ will say, 'Depart from me.'

(1.) The evil liver and profane person shall be banished Christ's presence. The black sinner shall not stand before the white throne: 'Then shall he say unto them, Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not,' Mat. vii. 23; Luke xiii. 27. Those who lived in the breach of his commands, must not live in the enjoyment of his company. The workers of iniquity must associate with the wicked one, not with the holy one. Heaven can by no means admit the unholy: 'Into it can in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination,' Rev. xxi. 27. Scandalous sinners proclaim to the world, that the devil, not Christ, is their master; and that hell, where the devil is with his angels, not heaven, where Christ is with his angels, shall be their eternal home. They who never liked or loved his presence on the earth, but banished him their hearts and houses, must think and expect that he will not like or love their presence, but sentence them to an everlasting banishment from him.

(2.) The grossly ignorant creature shall be banished the presence

of Christ. He will not know them who do not know him. Wilful ignorance doth certainly exclude the undefiled inheritance. A blind eye cannot see the blessed Jesus in all his glory, neither can a dark heart enjoy the kingdom of light. 'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels; to render vengeance on them that know not God, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,' 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. The portion of such will be everlasting destruction from his presence. They are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because they reject knowledge, Christ will reject them, Hosea iv. 6. They are lost souls, whose eyes the God of this world hath blinded, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Inner darkness is the direct way to utter darkness.

(3.) The hypocritical professor shall be excluded the presence of Christ. He that hath but the shadow of holiness, must expect a real hell. If thou bearest the name of Christ, and art not partaker of the divine nature, thy profession, as Uriah's letter to Joab, will but hasten thy execution: Job xiii. 16, 'He (*i.e.*, God) also shall be my salvation; but an hypocrite shall not come before him.' God will be the godly upright soul's salvation, but not the hypocrite's. He shall not dwell with God, Ps. v. 4; no, not stand in his sight, Ps. v. 5; nay, not so much as come before him with any comfort. He may come before good men with acceptance, as the foolish virgins before the wise, who were ignorant of their hypocrisy, but he shall not come before the omniscient God. When those virgins came which wanted oil, the door was shut, Mat. xxv.; there was no entrance, no admission for them. They had not received God into their hearts, though he was often in their lips, and he would not receive them into his house; the door was shut.

CHAPTER IX.

An exhortation to fly from this wrath to come, with some helps thereunto.

2. It may exhort us to take heed that this separation from Christ be not our portion. O reader, how much doth it concern thee, whatever thou losest, to make sure of the presence of Christ in the other world! Believe it, though thou canst bear the loss of an estate, or friends, or relations, yea, and the partial absence of Christ in this world, yet the total loss of Christ in the other world will be an intolerable loss. They who live here cheerfully without

him, cannot do so there. When thou shalt be banished from all thy possessions, and all thy relations, and all thy worldly comforts, then also to be banished from Christ, the Prince of life, and Lord of glory, and consolation of Israel, will be a woe with a witness.

Canst thou read and hear the misery of the wicked, in their total, eternal separation from Christ, and not tremble for fear it should be thy portion, lest thou shouldst be of the number of them that shall hear that dreadful voice, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire'?

To this end, that thou mayest escape this woeful condition of the ungodly, obey these few directions.

1. Believe and bewail your enmity against Christ. He loves you, yet by nature thou hatest him, Prov. viii.; Rom. i. 31, and viii. 7. Indeed he may say of thee, and all others in thy condition, 'They hated me without a cause.' But thou dost hate him, and thereby art wholly uncapable of his presence: 'Can two walk together unless they be agreed?'

This enmity of thine against Christ, which discovers itself in thy daily rebellions against his laws, and opposition to his authority, must be felt and lamented. There is little hope of their recovery who are sick unto death, and insensible thereof: Mat. ix. 12, 'They that be whole need not the physician, but they that are sick.' Thy first work must be to know this plague of thine own heart; and to know it, not notionally, as a physician, by reading of it, or beholding it in others; but experimentally, as the patient knoweth a disease by feeling it, complaining of it, mourning for it, and longing to be freed from it.

Consider with thyself how impossible it is for thee to delight in the presence of Christ,whom thou abhorrest, and to take pleasure in the company of any whom thy nature hath a reluctancy against.

2. Make Christ your friend through faith in his blood. There is no getting to Christ hereafter, but by coming to him here. Accept him now, and he will accept thee then. He will say to those that are now strangers to him, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.' If thou dost not know him, and him crucified, in this world, he will not know thee in the other world. Thou canst not rationally expect admission into his presence, if thou hast no acquaintance with his person. Strangers and enemies are kept out, when children, and those that are the friends of the master of the house, are taken in. It is by faith in his blood that thou canst be united to him, and made one with him; as the wife is united to the husband, and the members to the head: Eph. v. 27, 'That he

might present it to himself a glorious church.' Eph. i. 23, 'Which is the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.' Eph. iii. 17, and being so made one with him, husband and wife, head and members shall be together for ever: 'Where I am, there shall ye be also,' John xiv. 2, 3. The great ground of Christ's passion was, to bring those that believed to God, and that they might abide with him eternally.

3. Follow after holiness. The holy soul can only suit a holy Saviour, and therefore the holy soul can only enjoy the holy Saviour. Two cannot walk comfortably together, unless there be an agreement in their dispositions: 'Into the new Jerusalem can in no wise enter any thing that defileth, or is unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27.

Heaven is a holy hill, Ps. xv. 1; an undefiled inheritance, 1 Peter i. 3; the holiest or most holy place, Heb. ix. 8, 12; and therefore will admit of none but holy persons. Dogs must be without, when children shall be taken within doors.

CHAPTER X.

The positive part of the sinner's misery, expressed by fire, and why.

I come now to the second part of the punishment of the wicked, and that is *pœna sensus*, the positive part of their misery, or that anguish which God will inflict on their souls and bodies. Which punishment is set forth,

1. By its extremity.
2. Eternity.

I shall speak first to its extremity, fire: εἰς τὸ πῦρ. The Greek word πῦρ comes from the Hebrew *ur*, and so the Latin *uro*, to burn. From the Greek πῦρ comes *pyrausta*, a fly that lives in the fire, and dies out of it. Fire is used to describe the pains of hell, because of the violent pain and extreme torture which it causeth. Whether it be a material fire, as Augustine and Bullinger think, or metaphorical, as Gregory and Calvin, *i.e.*, a pain equivalent thereunto, nay, much more grievous, as others imagine; but this is certain, no racks or engines of pain or misery here below are sufficient to set forth those instruments of eternal death which God hath prepared for the wicked in the other world. The wrath of God, which is the very dregs of the cup that the damned shall drink, is called fire, Ps. xviii. 8; nay, God himself in this respect

is called a consuming fire: Heb. xii. 29, 'For our God is a consuming fire.'

The doctrine which I shall draw from this positive part of the wicked's punishment shall be this:

Doct. 2. That the wicked shall in the other world depart from Christ into fire: 'Depart from me into everlasting fire.' They shall not only be stripped of all good, 'Depart from me,' but also be filled with all evil, 'into everlasting fire.' Our Saviour, in Mat. xviii. 9, calls it hell-fire; and the Holy Ghost terms it 'the vengeance of the eternal fire,' Jude 7.

In the explication of this doctrine, I shall shew,

1. Why the positive punishment of the wicked is set out by fire.

2. Wherein it exceeds our fire.

1. For the former. The punishment of the damned resembleth fire,

(1.) In regard of its intension, and the extreme pain and anguish it causeth. Fire is the most outrageous and tormenting of all the elements. Nebuchadnezzar thought to fright and fear men to purpose with the threatening of a fiery furnace. The fire in the valley of Hinnom, wherein children were offered as a burnt-offering to the devil, was exquisitely tormenting. But who can tell the pains of hell? Those fires are but dark shadows and representations of this fire. What elementary or culinary fire is comparable to that fire? Phalaris's bull, Low-Country racks, foreign strapadoes, are nothing; not so much as flea-bites to the fire of hell.

The woeful effect of it speaks it terrible. It causeth weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. The stoutest heart will then be forced to weep like a child for pain; the most resolute sturdy spirit will wail and moan for anguish, and all will bite their flesh, and gnash their teeth with envy. There Cain may cry out indeed, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' For alas! who can dwell in everlasting burnings?

The infinite wisdom that prepared it, speaks it intolerable; 'Prepared for the devil and his angels,' ἡτοιμασμένον; the word signifieth *divinam destinationem*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Heaven is prepared for the godly, Mat. xxv. 35; and they for heaven, Rom. ix. 23; Col. i. 12. So wicked men are prepared for hell, Rom. ix. 22; and hell for them. As if God had from eternity consulted and contrived the most exquisite way and means of afflicting the creature; as if his wrath had set his infinite wisdom and power on work to devise the fittest materials for the punishment of the wicked, and the most cutting, killing instruments of eternal death.

The company in this place of torment will render it the more

miserable; the devil and his angels, those frightful fiends and bitter foes of mankind, shall be his eternal associates. That cursed crew which drew men to sin, and tempted them so diligently, shall be tormented with them, and a torment to them for ever. The word for devil properly signifieth a calumniator or slanderer.[1] He first slandered God to man, and then man to God; he is therefore called the accuser of his brethren, Rom. xii. 11. Those evil angels have their names either from their natures, as spirits; or office, as angels; or dignity, as principalities and powers; or malice against God, as Satan, devil; or their fall and fruits, as unclean spirit, evil one, father of lies, murderer, deaf and dumb spirit. The devil is mentioned singularly, because there is one chief, the prince of devils, Mat. xii; and the rest under him; or because they are all one in counsel, as if but one in being. The chief devil hath many others under him, at his call and command. This fire is said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, because they are the greatest and chiefest of sinners, others are but their scholars. Now how hot is that hell, that fire which God from all eternity devised for the devils, his most malicious enemies! And how ill will they speed who have millions of such dreadful devils for their everlasting companions.

(2.) In regard of the universality of the pains it will cause. Fire hath all manner of torments in it, and afflicts the whole man. If any be troubled extremely with the gout, or the stone, or the colic, or the toothache, or any one racking distemper, how dolefully doth he cry out and complain! But if all manner of diseases should in extremity seize a man, and that in every part of him, how dreadfully would he weep and wail! The truth is, colic, stone, cancer, gout, toothache, pleurisy, St Anthony's fire, and all other, are included in this fire. It hath not only extremity, but also universality of torments; thick darkness for the eyes, hideous yelling for the ears, loathsome brimstone for the smell; and every sense molested and offended in the highest degree, every part tormented in flames.

CHAPTER XI.

The difference between our fires and hell fires.

But the great pain of the wicked will more fully appear, if we consider the difference between our fires on earth, and that in hell.

[1] τῷ διαβόλῳ ἀπὸ τὸ διαβαλλου, because he strikes through with his darts; καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτου, as his agents and emissaries.

1. They differ in the cause of their kindling. Our fires are kindled with cold air, a puff of wind; thus the spark is blown up into a flame. 'But Tophet is prepared of old; for the king it is prepared; the pile therefore is fire and much wood: and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,' Isa. xxx. 33. Oh what a flame is that which is blown up by the breath of an almighty God. What a vast difference is there between the breath of man, or of a pair of bellows, and the breath of a God? This breath is like a stream of brimstone; and if the breath that kindleth the fire be like a stream, or rather a sea of brimstone, what is the fire itself? What a vast difference is there between the breath of a pair of bellows, and the fire kindled by them.

2. They differ in their nature. Our fires are by philosophers described to be a stream of sulphurous particles, or swarm of motes of brimstone, violently agitated, and forcibly breaking forth from those respective bodies to which they did formerly belong. And this is apparent, because when anybody is thoroughly burnt, the sulphurous parts are almost gone; and when those parts are gone what remains will burn no longer. But the fire of hell, whether it be material or metaphorical, is quite another thing. It is a deep impression of infinite wrath and fury on every member of the body, and faculty of the soul, And oh what a fearful thing is it to fall into the hands of the living God: 'For our God is a consuming fire,' Heb. xii. 29. The wrath of God is sometimes compared to that of a lion roaring after her prey, which tears, and rents, and kills, and slays, without the least pity; and to a bear robbed of her whelps, which claws and wounds, and destroys whatsoever comes near her; but, alas! the wrath of a God is infinitely more cutting, more killing. The mountains are moved, the rocks are rent in pieces, the stoutest oaks are rooted up, the foundations of the earth tremble, the great luminaries are darkened, the course of nature is overturned, when he is wroth. 'Thou, even thou art to be feared; for who may stand when thou art angry?'

If his wrath be kindled but a little, how woefully do his own children cry out! Job vi. 4, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me.' Job xiii. 24, 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?' Ps. lxxxviii., 'Their spirits are drunk up, while they suffer his terrors, they are distracted.' What then will be the condition of them on whom he will pour out all his wrath? If a small degree of God's anger be so terrible, when it is mingled with love, what will a full cup of pure wrath be?

3. They differ in the ends of their creation. Our fires were

created for our service and comfort; God made these for the use and benefit of man, to fence us against the cold, to melt and mould metals, and form them into several moulds, &c. But the fire of hell is created for the torment of men and devils; God makes it of such a nature as may best suit his end. For every wise agent fitteth his means to his end; and the more wise the agent is, the more proper means he findeth out for his end. Now when the only wise God, to whom angels themselves are fools, shall set his infinite wisdom a-work about the most proper means of racking and torturing the poor creature, surely it will be done to purpose. As when his love sets his wisdom a-work, to find out a way to comfort his children, what rivers of pleasures, weights of glory, crowns of life, fulness of joy doth he provide! So when his wrath sets wisdom a-work to find out a way for the afflicting his enemies, what stinging adders, and gnawing worms, and chains of darkness, and lakes of brimstone doth he provide!

4. They differ in the fuel that feeds them. Our fires are maintained and preserved in burning by wood or coals, or somewhat that is combustible, and the fire must be suitable to the meanness and limitedness of the fuel; but the fire of hell is fed with the curse of a righteous law, and the wrath of an infinite God, and the lusts of the damned. Ah, what work will sin, backed with the curse and wrath of God, make in the souls and bodies of men. If David, beloved of God, under the weight of sin, and sense of divine displeasures, went mourning all the day, and crieth out so mournfully, 'Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; nor rest in my bones because of my sin. Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me,' Ps. xxxviii. 2–4. Oh what will they suffer, and how will they roar and howl, whose sins, as a mountain of lead, shall press and oppress their consciences! all whose lusts shall gnaw their spirits, set home and close to their souls by the fury and malediction of God.

5. They differ in this, that our fires are accompanied with light; but the fire of hell, though it hath heat to torment, hath no light to comfort. It is a state of darkness, of utter darkness, Mat. xxv.; of blackness of darkness, Jude 13. They have only light enough to see themselves endlessly and easelessly wretched and miserable. Darkness is dreadful, but what darkness like utter darkness, or blackness of darkness? The Egyptians did not move out of their places in the time of their darkness; but what will men do in the dark, in the midst of ravenous wolves, and roaring

lions, and stinging adders, and fiery serpents, and frightful devils.

6. They differ in their operations.

(1.) Our fires work only on the body, they cannot pierce the soul; but hell-fire pierceth the soul. Spirits burn in it as well as bodies: 'Go into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' If it seize on devils, it will also on the souls of men. The spirit whose senses are most acute, will feel the greatest pain in the unquenchable fire.

(2.) Our fires destroy and consume their fuel; they turn their wood and coals into dust and ashes; the bodies of men are by them turned into ashes, and hereby the pain ceaseth with the life of the creature. But the fire of hell will never consume, though it be ever consuming; it will always be destroying, but never destroy the sinner. The damned will be always dying, but never die. The almighty hand of God will preserve them, to undergo that wrath that is intolerable, and those flames that are unquenchable.

CHAPTER XII.

The fulness of wicked men's misery, in that it is positive and privative, with some cautions against it.

Use. Learn hence the full misery of the wicked in the other world. They shall not only be deprived of all good, in their banishment from the presence of God, but also be afflicted with all evil, in their suffering the pains of hell-fire. The godly in the other world shall be perfectly blessed, in their freedom from all penal and all moral evil, and their fruition of all that is truly good, for they shall ever be with the Lord, who is an universal good. So the wicked in the world to come shall be perfectly cursed in the absence of whatever is comfortable, and in the presence of whatsoever is dreadful, and may render them miserable; snares, fire, brimstone, a horrible tempest shall be rained on them as their portion. Woeful are the fruits of sin oftentimes in this world. It keeps good from men here, strips them of their estates, relations, liberties, limbs, health, names; nay of the gospel, ordinances, and seasons of grace, and brings on them much evil here, aches, pains, diseases in their bodies, horrors and terrors in their souls. But these are nothing to the effects of sin in the other world. Here in the midst of judgment, mercy is remembered; there is no state

on earth of mere or pure wrath; all good things are not removed, nor all evil things inflicted on any. In the worst estate there is life, and that clothed with some favours; the pained have some intermission, or at least remission of their pains. In the lowest estate there is hope of better, and that is no small cordial to a poor creature; there is no condition so bad, but might have been worse, both for its intension and duration. But now in the other world the wicked have judgment without a mite of mercy, and misery without any ease, either in regard of degree or intermission; all good banished from them, and all evil inflicted on them.

Exhort. If the wicked shall be thus punished with the loss of Christ and the pains of hell-fire, it exhorts us to flee from the wrath to come. Ah, who would fry one hour in flames for a kingdom! How dreadful is the hearing of *fire, fire,* in the night! How doth the very sound of it fright men and women! Ah, then, what will the feeling of it be in utter darkness, in that black long night of eternity! Sinner, when thou art tempted to sin, consider whether the satisfaction of thy lust will make thee amends for, and balance the loss of, God, and thy suffering the flames of hell.

Alas! how little is the pleasure of sin, but how terrible, how intolerable, is the pain of it! What wise man would be racked a day for a moment's delight? much less suffer the wrath of an infinite God for the dreggy pleasures of a beast. Dost thou think thou canst bear it? art thou able to endure it? canst thou suffer the pain of our fire? if not, how wilt thou endure the pain of that fire which the breath of a God kindleth and keepeth burning—which tortures the soul as well as the body, and which was prepared of God for the afflicting and punishing his creatures? O friend, fly to Christ if thou wouldst flee from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. i. 10. He is the only screen between thee and the fire of hell. Fly from sin if thou wouldst fly from hell-fire. Fly the cause, and thou fliest the effect. Take away sin, and you take away hell. Whatsoever thou sowest now, thou shalt reap hereafter, Gal. vi. 7. Sow lust, and reap the lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever. Sow holiness, and reap happiness: 'They who sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but they who sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting,' Gal. vi. 8.

CHAPTER XIII.

The eternity of the sinner's misery in the other world, with the grand reason of it.

I come now to the eternity of the sinner's punishment in that word *everlasting.*

Τὸ αἰώνιον. The word is referred to God, and then is used for that which is eternal, *a parte ante*, or that never had a beginning. Sometimes it is referred to the rational creature, and then signifieth an eternity, *a parte post*, or that which never hath an end. The word comes from *αἰων*, an age, because what is everlasting endureth through all ages and generations, and infinitely beyond them.

The doctrine which I shall draw from this property of ungodly men's punishment shall be this:

Doct. 3. That the punishment of the wicked in the other world will be everlasting. It will not only be extreme, in regard of its intension, but also eternal, in regard of its duration. Their privative punishment will be eternal: 'They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,' 2 Thes. i. 7, 8; and so will their positive punishment be, Jude 7. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, are set forth suffering the vengeance of the eternal fire. And Christ tells us, 'There the worm never dieth, and the fire never goeth out,' Mat. xviii.; and again it is called 'the lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever.'

It were no small ease to the damned, if they had hopes of any end of their misery; though after as many millions of millions of years as have been moments since the creation, and as are creatures small and great in both worlds; but it may not be, it cannot be; after all these years they are not to remain one moment the less in hell.

I shall only give the reasons of it, and proceed to the use.

There are several reasons given why the sinner's temporal fault should have an eternal punishment.

1. Some tell us, he refused eternal life, and therefore it is but reason he should be punished with eternal death. They had eternal pains and eternal pleasures set before them, and they chose eternal pains. In choosing the way, they chose the end; they chose the way of the flesh, the way of their own hearts, and so consequenti-

ally they chose hell, to which that way led. Now if a man hath but his own choice, whom can he blame but himself? If a man have what he desireth and loveth, if it be ill with him, he must thank himself: 'He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all that hate me love death,' Prov. viii. 36; Jer. iv. 17, 18.

2. Others tell us that if they should live here for ever, they would sin for ever; therefore God, taking the will for the deed, punisheth them for ever. They die eternally for sin, who would have lived eternally in sin. *Vellet sine fine vivere, ut posset sine fine peccare*, (Greg.): Man would live here for ever if he had his will, that he might sin for ever. Scotus and Aquinas tell us, *Peccant in æterno suo, et puniuntur in æterno Dei:* They sin in their eternity, and God punisheth them in his eternity. If God would give them an eternal abode on earth, they would employ it in disobeying and dishonouring him eternally; and because they would sin for ever, therefore they shall suffer for ever. Jer. viii. 5, 'The children of Israel are slidden back with a perpetual backsliding; they hold fast deceit, and refuse to return.' How loath are they to forsake their lusts. 1. They hold them fast: 'As a fountain sendeth forth water, so doth the sinner send forth wickedness,' Jer. vi. 7. Now a fountain sendeth forth water freely without constraint, and constantly without cessation. What anything doth naturally, it doth easily and unweariedly. The sun shines naturally, and he shines without any pains or tiresomeness; the fountain sends forth water naturally, and doth it with ease and constancy. So the sinner sins naturally, and doth it delightfully and unweariedly. When the body and its members, the instruments of sin, are tired and worn out, and unable to execute the lusts of the flesh, the body of sin is still fresh and vigorous in plotting and conspiring evil, and in embracing and cherishing evil motions; whence it appears that man sinning naturally would, if he lived, sin eternally, and then, say they, he is tormented for ever. But,

3. The principal reason of the eternity of the sinner's misery, and indeed the only reason in my judgment, with due respect to others, is the infinite demerit of sin, as committed against an infinite majesty. Because the sinner is not capable of bearing a punishment infinite in intension, therefore he must have it infinite in duration. I doubt not but if the sinner were able to bear the infinite stroke of divine justice, notwithstanding his will to sin for ever, and his choice of eternal death, and all the other reasons that are usually brought for the eternity of their pains, he should not stay long in that prison of hell, but quickly be released. But be-

cause a poor finite creature hath not a back strong enough to bear an infinite blow, therefore he must be always suffering.

The notoriety and malignity of sin proceeds from the dignity of the person against whom it is committed, as I have largely shewn elsewhere.[1] Because the authority of an infinite God is despised, the law of an infinite God disobeyed, the love of an infinite God undervalued, and the image of an infinite God defaced by sin, therefore there is an infinite demerit in sin: and because man cannot give satisfaction infinite in value, therefore he must give that satisfaction which is infinite in time, or rather in its eternity, Ps. xlix. 7, 8, and li. 4; Job vii. 20. And considering that God was resolved to have full satisfaction for sin, I conceive Christ himself could not have satisfied for the sins of any, if he could not have offered a sacrifice of infinite merit to answer the infinite demerit of sin. But herein the wisdom and goodness of God did superabound, in providing an antidote stronger than the poison; for whereas sin is infinite, only *objectivè*, as committed against an infinite God; the sacrifice of Christ is infinite, both *objectivè* and *subjectivè*, as offered up to an infinite Majesty, and offered by one that was an infinite Majesty; whose person being infinite, rendered his sacrifice of such boundless value and merit.

CHAPTER XIV.

How little cause to envy sinners, and how careful we should be to avoid their eternal misery.

Use. 1. We may learn hence what little cause any have to envy sinners their fat and sweet in this world. Alas! for their poor short pleasures of sin, they must have extreme and eternal torments. Who would grudge them their portion, or eat of their dainties, or buy their bargains, that is not mad, and quite bereft of his wits: Prov. xxiii. 17, 18, 'My son, envy not sinners; for surely there is an end;' ay, and a sad end for poor sinners. An end, of woe, and wrath, and death, and misery, without any end or ease. Ah, what sad objects are they of pity who laugh a minute, and must weep for ever! who for a little giggling mirth, and poor drossy pleasures, must fry eternally in hell flames among devils and damned spirits.

Exhort. Reader, believe and consider this misery of the wicked, and be restless till thou art secured against it. Ponder it well, to

[1] In a treatise called The Incomparableness of God.

be among devils, those stinging serpents, roaring lions, frightful monsters, would make thy hair stand on end, and thy heart to ache; but to be amongst them in extremity of torments, in fire, in fire kindled by the infinite wrath of God, and in universality of torments; to have all kinds of judgments and plagues inflicted on thee, ay, and on every part of thy body, and all the powers of thy soul; and to suffer all this for ever, ever, ever! Canst thou bear the company of lions, and bears, and wolves, and adders, and serpents, and the deformed monsters here for ever? How then wilt thou bear the company of devils, hideous, monstrous, frightful hell-hounds, for ever? Thou canst not bear the pain of our fire for one day, no, not for one quarter of an hour, how then wilt thou bear the pain of hell-fire for ever? 'Ah, who can dwell in everlasting burnings?' who can endure abiding flames? The patient, in a violent fit of the stone, or colic, or gout, supports himself with this cordial, This will not last long. The woman in labour, in the extremity of her pains, hath this to revive her, All this, through the kindness of God, will soon be over. The primitive Christians comforted themselves under their dreadful sufferings from their persecutors with this, Our light afflictions are but for a moment; they are black clouds, but will soon pass over, and vanish away. But, reader, if once thou art turned into hell, into those unconceivable, intolerable flames, amongst those frightful devils, thou canst have nothing to bear up thy spirit, not the least hope of any cessation, or intermission, or remission of thy pains. Ah, how will despair, like a dagger, stab thee to the heart! What a cutting corrosive will it be to think, I am here amongst horrid, hideous, hellish devils, who have been my tempters, and are now my tormentors, banished the blissful presence of God and Jesus Christ, suffering those torments, and pains, and misery, to which all the fires and racks on earth are but as the raising of skin to Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. Ah, what tongue can tell what this poor body suffereth in every part of it! Ah, what understanding can apprehend the anguish and remorse of this soul, its cutting reflections on what it hath been and done, and its killing prevision of what it must undergo, and I must endure all this for ever! Though my pains are so extreme in their intension, yet if they were short in their duration, I had some ground of comfort; nay, if they were to last no more millions of years than there are stars in heaven, and drops of water in the ocean, I should have some crevice of light, some hope to bear up my heart; but alas, alas! I am here in the midst of this cursed crew, under these extreme ineffable pains, and must be here for

ever. The wrath upon me is abiding wrath, John iii. 24. It is wrath to come, and ever will be wrath to come. After ages, and generations, and millions of them, ay, and millions of millions of them, my pain would not be a moment the nearer a period. My night of darkness and horror will be a long night indeed; the clock will never strike, the time will never pass, the morn will never dawn, and the sun will never rise. Oh what shall I do? thousands, and thousands of thousands, millions, and millions of millions of millions, signify not a moment to my wretched and cursed eternity. Ah such company, such misery, and that for ever, ever, ever! Reader, doth not thy soul tremble to think of this, which will be the portion, probably, of most in the Christian world; and wilt thou give thyself a moment's rest, in a state liable and obnoxious to it? For the sake of thy precious soul, if thou hast any true self-love, break off thy sins by repentance, and thine iniquities by accepting of thy Redeemer. Hell hath not yet shut its mouth upon thee, nor is the gate of mercy yet shut against thee. Oh bless the divine patience, and know the things that concern thine own peace.

Thy life is short and uncertain; when once death seizeth thee, thou art immediately fixed, there can be no change, no alteration of thy state. Tears, prayers, groans, sighs, sobs, will work nothing, prevail nothing with the judge to alter his sentence, or thy condition. 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' Therefore, O sinner, 'agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,' Mat. v. 25, 26. But having written largely of this in another treatise, and intending to speak of it here only by way of preface to what I mainly intend, and now come to discourse of, and that is the nature, danger, cause, and curse of sins of omission, in the reasons of this severe sentence, I shall speak no more thereof, but proceed to the third general part of the text, and that is the reason.

CHAPTER XV.

The reason of Christ's severe sentence, and a question resolved, whether the righteous, by their acts of charity, do not deserve heaven, as well as the wicked, by their omission thereof, deserve hell.

Thirdly, The reason of Christ's severe sentence against them: ver. 42, 43, 'For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.'

The words have nothing of difficulty in them, and therefore I shall not waste time in the explication of them. Every one knows what it is not to give meat to the hungry, or drink to the thirsty, or raiment to the naked, &c. That it is the omission of a duty, viz., charity, which God commands, and also that believers are the members of Christ, Eph. i. 23, Christ mystical, 1 Cor. xii. 12; and therefore what injuries are done to them are done to Christ, Acts ix. Only it may be needful to speak to these two particulars before I raise the doctrine.

1. Whether there be not the like ground of the salvation of the blessed that there is of the damnation of the wicked; namely, the merit of their works. Both seem to speak it: 'Come, ye blessed,' &c.; 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat.' Again, 'Go, ye cursed,' &c.; 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c.

2. Why Christ will try men at the great day by the performance or neglect of this duty of charity, and not rather by their performance or neglect of prayer, hearing, watchfulness, or some other duty, or by their humility, heavenly-mindedness, patience, temperance, &c.

In answer to the first, though Bellarmine affirms there is the same reason in each, and Cornel. A Lapide, with the rest of the papists, concur therein, yet if they were not wilfully blind, they might see enough in the text to disprove them.

1. In that Christ calls to the blessed to inherit the kingdom. κληρονομήσατε τὴν βασιλείαν, which word signifieth *hæreditatis jure possidere*, to enjoy a thing by right of inheritance, from parents and ancestors, and not by right of purchase, or deserving; therefore heaven is often called κληρονομία, an inheritance, Col. i. 12; Eph. i. 14; 1 Pet. i. 3. So the type of it, the land of Canaan,

is often called by the LXX, probably from the division or distribution of the land by lot to them, Josh. xiv. 2, which to a word is the import of the word.[1] Now, they who enjoy an estate by right of sonship do not possess it by merit. What can a child, who may inherit his deceased father's estate in his childhood or infancy, do to deserve that estate?

2. In that Christ tells them that this kingdom was prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Now, what could they do before they had a being to deserve this inheritance? And the apostle is positive that all is to be referred to the purpose of God, not to the piety of any men. 'For,' saith he, 'the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, (mark) not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger,' Rom. ix. 11, 12; Eph. i. 4; Rev. xiii. 8.

If it be objected, that God foresaw that they would improve their free-will unto the performance of such good works, whereby they would deserve heaven, and therefore chose them to heaven, which the papists stand much upon, I answer,

1. The foresight of their faith and good works cannot be the cause of their election, because their election is by God himself declared to be the cause of their faith and good works. If their faith and obedience be the effect of election, they cannot be the cause of it; but so they are: Job vi. 37, 'All that the Father hath given me shall come to me,' *i.e.*, believe on me. Again, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed,' Acts xiii. 48; so for good works, John xv. 13; Eph. i. 4; Rom. viii. 30.

2. Then man's will must be the ground of God's actions, not his own will. The Scripture tells us that God 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,' Eph. i. 11. But, say the papists, in election, God worketh according to the improvement of man's will.

3. Then the accomplishment of God's decree depends upon the mutable and uncertain will of man, so that there is a possibility that God may be disappointed of his choice, and his elect of that happiness to which they are chosen, if both depend on a changeable creature. But the word of God speaks the contrary, that God cannot be frustrated of his choice: Ps. xxxiii. 11, 'The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.' His decrees are sure, 2 Tim. ii. 19, though his sentence may be altered, Jer. xviii. 7–10. Nor can the elect be disappointed:

[1] Ἀ κληρος *sors* et νομος *lex*, seu νεμω, *distribuo* quia hæreditates olim per sortem distribui solebant.

Mat. xxiv. 24, 'If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect.' Here the impossibility of their seduction is grounded on the stability of their election.

4. Then there can be no election of infants to everlasting life; I mean, of such as God foreseeth or ordaineth to die in their infancy, because God cannot foresee that these will improve the liberty of their wills unto faith and repentance. That infants may be saved is clear: Mat. xix. 14, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Matthew calls them *παιδία*, Luke, *βρέφη*; the first word signifieth *puerulus*, a little child,—one, say the critics, that is in the first seven years of his age; but the latter, Luke xviii. 15, signifieth infants newly born, or sucking babes. Now, if of such is the kingdom of heaven, then they may be saved. But none are saved save such as are elected; therefore without any foresight of faith or good works, rational creatures may be elected, Rom. viii. 30, and xi. 7.

5. If foresight of men's works be the cause of their election, then man hath whereof to glory. He is then the cause of his own salvation. Election is the original of all; a spring that runneth under ground for a time, first bubbleth up and discovers itself in effectual calling, so glideth along in a life of faith and holiness, and at last emptieth itself in the ocean of peace, and joy, and happiness; so that if man be the cause of his election, then he may thank himself for his salvation. John is no more beholden to God than Judas, for it is the improvement of the freedom of his will which brings him to heaven. God did as much for Judas, say they, as for John. But how contrary is this to the word of truth: Rom. iv. 2, 'But if Abraham were justified by works, he had whereof to glory.' The Scripture speaks in another dialect: 'By grace ye are saved through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast,' Eph. ii. 8, 9. The knife with which Adam cut his own throat, and wherewith he murdered his posterity, was pride; he would hold of himself, and not of God. The wise and gracious God, in the way he hath taken for our recovery, is pleased to lay this knife as far as may be out of our way, lest we be ruined by it a second time. Though this pride, the popish doctrine of merits, and foresight of good works maintains; but God tells us, man is nothing, and God all in all, 'that no flesh might glory in his presence,' 1 Cor. i. 27–29.

6. The Holy Ghost gives us the true ground or motive of election, far differing from this of the papists, and that is the will and pleasure of God: 'Having predestinated us according to the good

pleasure of his will,' Eph. i. 5; 'Being predestinated according to the purpose of him,' ver. 11.

Rom. ix. 18, 'Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.'

Mat. xi. 26, 'Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

2 Tim. i. 9, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our work, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.' Again, the particle *for*, *enim*, *γὰρ*,[1] is counted causal, not that always it noteth the cause, but sometimes a reason or argument, whether taken from the cause or effect, Mat. i. 18, and xv. 14; 2 Tim. ii. 7. Besides, this is sufficient for parity of reason, or the resemblance, that as some go by the way of good works to heaven, so others by the way of evil works to hell. Good works are not *ποιητικὰ, ceu causa salutis, sed σημαντικὰ, respectu fidei et finis ejus vitæ æternæ*, (Glass. ;) not the cause of reigning, but the way to the kingdom. Once more, let the papists shew the same proportion between a few imperfect defective good works, which men are enabled to do by the help of God, and the unconceivable eternal joys and glory of heaven, that is between the evil works of men and the endless pains of hell, and then let them plead their merits. They may, if they please, observe that the saints themselves are so far from pleading their merits, or boasting their deserts, that they hardly remember that they ever did those works which Christ proclaims to their praise, and rewards through his own blood with a kingdom: 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry or thirsty?' &c. Oh, what a vast difference is there between an upright humble Christian, who acknowledgeth himself less than the least of all God's mercies, and a proud papist, that dares say, *Cœlum gratis non accipiam!*

CHAPTER XVI.

Why Christ will try men at the great day by acts of charity.

The second question to be discussed before I proceed to the doctrine is, Why Christ trieth men at that day by the neglect or performance of charity, and not of some other duty, as hearing, pray-

[1] Piscat. *in loc.*

ing, watching? &c., or by their patience, humility, temperance, or heavenly-mindedness? &c. To this I answer:

These works of charity are by a synecdoche put for new obedience, and all the good works of a Christian's life. Though Christ mention those as the test of men at that day, yet he doth not hereby exclude others. The Scripture abundantly proveth that other graces and duties shall be rewarded at that day, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; Mat. x. 18; Heb. vi. 10, &c., and that men shall be condemned for other sins beside the neglect of charity. The want of the wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 12, 13; unprofitableness in the improvement of talents, Mat. xxv. 30. We have a bed-roll of other sins condemning, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Rev. xxi. 8; indeed every sin, any sin that men have lived in and loved, who have died impenitent, will be found damnable at that day.

It cannot rationally be supposed that the performance or neglect of those outward acts of charity should be the general test, I mean of all; for how then shall those that die in their infancy and childhood, or such as are extremely poor, be tried, who are rendered wholly incapable of feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked. Neither do I judge it shall be the sole test, for it is possible for a man in those outward acts to be bountiful to men, who hath no regard or fear of God in him. The apostle supposeth a man may give all his goods to the poor, and yet be void of true love to the poor, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. It is unquestionable that the worship of the blessed God is much more excellent than our kindness to the children of men, as Calvin well observeth on the text; yet Christ, who knoweth the hearts of all men, and from what principles they act, will mention the saints' acts of charity at that day, and reward them accordingly, and will mention the sinner's omission of charity at that day, and condemn him for it.

1. Because acts of charity are more obvious and apparent to the world. Though the Christian usually is close therein, and will not let his left hand know what his right hand doth, yet charity, like musk, will discover itself; the objects thereof will publish their benefactors; and he himself thinks it needful sometimes to be open and public in his liberality, though not for self-ostentation, yet for others' imitation. Luther tells us that Christ will try men this way, because the world shall justify his sentence both of reward and punishment. If a man be charitable, all his neighbours take notice of it, yea, commonly love him for it; the vilest of them will commend him, though by his holy conversation he condemns them. I suppose this is the good man of whom the apostle speaks,

when he tells us, that for such a one a man will even dare to die, Rom. v. Therefore when Christ shall acknowledge the charity of his people, and then reward them with himself, the wicked neighbours of these men will confess the truth thereof, and their consciences will force them to consent thereto. Again, there is hardly a muckworm, whose motto is to have and to hold, to heap and to hoard up, who will as soon part with his blood as anything considerable to the poor, but all his neighbours, good and bad, observe him, speak of him, and generally condemn him for his earthly-mindedness. So that when Christ, at the great day, shall accuse him, they will be forced to attest the truth of that accusation, and when Christ at that day shall condemn him, they cannot but agree to the sentence: Ps. lii. 6, 7, 'The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him: Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.'

2. Because these acts of charity are signs of faith and love, to which graces heaven is promised, James i. 12, and ii. 5; John iii. 16, 17, 36. Christ, who knoweth the heart, understandeth from what inward root our outward fruit springeth; and therefore faith and love, which are the fountain of true charity, James ii. 15–17, being inward and secret, he mentions what is more open and known as a sign and testimony of that faith in him, and love to him, which are invisible and unknown to the world. Faith is a grace seated in the heart: 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;' where by heart, I suppose, is understood the understanding and will; for faith, *in habitu*, is in each; and *in exercitio*, an act of both. And the heart is called a hidden man, 1 Pet. iii.; but it discovers itself to the believer by love. For when once the soul applieth Christ for pardon, and begins to hope for those great and good things which Christ hath purchased for him and promised to him, this faith kindleth a holy flame of love in the affections to Christ, and hereby the soul understands that he is a true believer beloved of God; for our love is but the reverberation of God's love back again to himself, 1 John iv. 19. And then faith discovers itself to others by these fruits and effects of love to God, *i.e.*, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. St Paul tells us that faith works by love, as its tool or instrument, Gal. v. 6. Love to God produceth love to his saints, and love to the saints will draw out the hand, and heart, and purse, to relieve them in their wants, 1 John iii. 17. Love is costly and expensive, thinks nothing too much or too good for its beloved. Mary's box of ointment is

very precious, but not too precious for her Lord. Life is worth all the world, yet laid down for a Christian at the command of love, 1 John iii. 16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.'

3. Because practical godliness, of which charity is a part, will be that by which men shall be tried at the great day. Our Lord Jesus doth hereby declare, that it is not the profession, but the practice of religion that will be inquired into by the judge of quick and dead. It is not saying, Be thou fed, and be thou clothed, without giving wherewith to be fed and clothed; but it is feeding the hungry and clothing the naked that shall be rewarded. Good words may please ourselves, but good works only please God, and profit our own souls: 'Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' It is the doing, not the talking Christian that hath the promise of heaven, Mat. vii. It is the practical, not the verbal Christian that hath a right to heaven, through the precious blood of Christ, and the gracious promise of God: Rev. xxii. 14, 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' It is the real, not the nominal Christian, that is prepared for heaven. None are fit to do the will of God in heaven, but those who have been accustomed to do the will of God on earth. There is a making meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. A young man by the school is made meet for the university, and a Christian by practical holiness is fitted for eternal happiness.

Our Redeemer would hereby declare, that all shows and shadows of godliness, all gaudy professions and curious flourishes of religion, if void of good works, though, as glow-worms, they shine somewhat in the dark night of this world, yet in the long day of eternity they will all vanish and disappear. God will not then examine who hath been the greatest talker of his will, but the greatest walker in his way; nor who hath been the best speaker, but who hath been the best doer: 'For whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man shall be blessed in his deed,' James i. 25. Hearing the word, without doing the work it commands, brings no blessing. The life and substance of religion consists in practising what is good, and not in praising what is good. It consists in Scripture duties, not in Scripture phrases.

4. Because Christ would hereby publish to the world the great

respect he hath for charity; therefore he tells us he will take special notice of his saints' charity at that day. Charity, whether in relieving the oppressed, or comforting the sorrowful, or counselling the doubtful, or supporting the feeble, or feeding the hungry, or visiting the sick, or clothing the naked, is highly esteemed of Christ. To what duty hath he annexed more or larger promises? Mat. v. 7; Ps. xviii. 25; Eccles. xi. 1, 2; Ps. xlvi. 1, and cxii. 1; Isa. lviii. 12. He speaks of it as if very much of religion did consist in it, and almost all of it: 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is, to visit the fatherless and the afflicted,' James i. 27. He slights our most severe duties, those which are most irksome to the flesh, if this be wanting, Ps. lviii. 7–10. He limits his own mercy to the merciful, 2 Sam. xxii. 25; James ii. 13. He is himself a merciful high priest, Heb. v. He had compassion on the ignorant, and those that were out of the way, Heb. v. 2; on those that had nothing to eat, Mat. xv. 32; on those that were scattered as sheep without a shepherd, Mat. ix. 36. Therefore he cannot but value exceedingly, and love tenderly, those that are like him. That which lieth so near his heart, must needs be inquired after, as much, if not more, than anything else; and there is scarce anything that speaks our respect of persons or things more than our inquiry after them. Joseph loved his father Jacob dearly, I suppose far above all his kindred, and therefore he first inquires after him: 'Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake?' Gen. xliii. 27. David's heart was set on Absalom, therefore, when the messenger returned from the battle, he doth in the first place, and in a special manner, inquire after him: 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' 2 Sam. xviii. Thus Christ, being so infinitely taken with charity, cannot but make a great inquiry after it at the great day. It is fruit that will then abound to the saints' account, Phil. iv. 17; and such seed, that they who sow it liberally shall reap it liberally, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

CHAPTER XVII.

Three particulars about the text.

I come now somewhat closer to the reason of the sentence: 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c. Here we must understand,

Obs. 1. That the omission of inward charity is included in

this of outward, and will be as dangerous, if not more, at the great day. The subject of it, the soul, is much more noble than the body; therefore to suffer a soul to perish through our neglect of giving it spiritual alms is a greater sin than to suffer the outward man to perish for want of bodily alms. Again, the end of spiritual alms is higher than of bodily—the eternal salvation of the soul: 1 Pet. i. 9, 'Receiving the end of your faith, the eternal salvation of your souls.' Both sorts of charity are comprehended into these two verses:

Visito, poto, cibo redimo, tego, colligo, condo;
Consule, castiga, solare, remitte, fer, ora.

Obs. 2. That other works beside works of charity, and other omissions beside the omission of this duty, will be mentioned at that day, and men shall be judged according to them. Indeed all our works will be then accounted for. But you will say, What time will this take up? I answer, It seems probable that the day of judgment may last longer than most imagine. The Holy Ghost tells us that 'God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,' Eccles. xii. 14. If every work, then more than acts of charity; and if every work good or bad, open or secret, then the day of judgment must be a long day. The apostle speaks the same as to the matter of judgment with the wise man: 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,' 2 Cor. v. 10.

There are two of our eminent English divines now with God, who have left their judgment herein upon record. One tells us: I humbly conceive that the day of judgment shall not be passed over in an instant, but shall be of long continuance. For if Christ should judge only as God, he could despatch it in an instant; but his judging us men will be after the manner of men, that the creature may understand, admire, and approve what is done.[1] The other saith: It must take up some large quantity of time to manifest all the secret sins of men; and therefore it may be made evident, both from Scripture and reason, that this day of Christ's kingly office, in judging the world, shall last happily longer than the day of Christ's private administration now in governing the world.[2]

Augustine tells us, *Per quot dies hoc judicium extendatur incertum est, Scripturarum more diem poni solere pro tempore nemo nescit.*[3]

[1] Mr Strong in a Sermon on 2 Cor. v. 10, p. 26.
[2] Mr Shepherd's Sound Convert, p. 88.
[3] Augustine, De Civit. Dei, lib. xx. cap. 1.

Obs. 3. Christ doth not say, Ye took my meat from me, or wronged me of my raiment, or persecuted me, and cast me into prison; but, 'I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; naked, and ye clothed me not; in prison, and ye visited me not.' He doth not say, I was hungry, and naked, and sick, and instead of relieving ye derided me, and by your taunts and jeers added affliction to the afflicted; or, Ye despised and condemned me, as they, James ii. 6; but, 'I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c. It was a bare omission of a necessary duty, for which they are sentenced to hell. It is not robbing, but not relieving; not oppressing them with violence, but not supplying their necessities, which Christ here condemneth them for.

These words, considered thus relatively as the reason of Christ's severe sentence, will afford us this doctrine which I chiefly intend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

That sins of omission are dangerous and damnable.

Doct. That sins of omission are dangerous and damnable, or Christ will sentence men at the great day to eternal punishment of loss and sense for not feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Observe how naturally the doctrine floweth from the text: 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,' &c. The sin mentioned is a bare omission, and the sentence clearly speaks the punishment; hence I gather that sins of omission are damnable. Christ will sentence men to hell for them. Saul's not slaying Agag (an omission) lost him the kingdom, 1 Sam. xv. 20, 26. The Moabites and Ammonites were excluded the sanctuary of God (a high and special privilege) to the tenth generation for an omission, for not meeting Israel with bread and water in the wilderness, Deut. xxxiii. 4.

But it is as clear these sins bring eternal as well as temporal pains and punishment. The slothful servant is sentenced, and sent into utter darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, for a bare omission, for not improving his talent, Mat. xxv. 24–31. The servant did not waste his talent by riotousness, as the prodigal did—for he tells his lord, ver. 25, 'Lo, here is thine'—only omit to improve it through idleness. But he who wanted hands to work,

had fetters provided for hands and feet; and he who would not work by the light, is rewarded with utter darkness.

Again, we have a clear and full proof of the doctrine in Mat. iii. 10, 'And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.' In the verse we have three parts considerable:

1. The sin, and that is a bare omission, the not bringing forth good fruit. Our Saviour speaks the same in Mat. vii. 19. He doth not say, Every tree that bringeth forth evil fruit is hewn down; that bringeth forth drunkenness, or robbery, or uncleanness, or unsavoury communication, &c., is cast into the fire; but 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit.' The sin is only a neglect of positive holiness.

2. The severity of the punishment; 'is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' The hewing down is the fitting and preparing the sinner for the fire, as the tree cut down is prepared for burning. This is done by their provoking God to leave them to impenitency, under the ministry of the word. The word is compared to a sword, Eph. vi. 17; a two-edged sword, Rev. i. 16. And it will cut, and hack, and hew to purpose: Hosea vi. 5, 'God heweth them by his prophets, and slays them by the word of his mouth.' It cuts to the heart, Acts ii. 37, and v. 33, and hath dreadful effects on them: Isa. vi. 9, 10, 'And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed.'

And this hewing them down is also by death. The axe of death fells the tree for the fire of hell. The rotten tree, or the barren tree, is not good for fruit, therefore for the fire.

He is hewn down,-and cast into the fire. Abscission is the way to perdition, to eternal burning. This is the catastrophe of the barren tree's tragedy.

3. The certainty of it. Both Christ and the Baptist speak of the punishment in the present tense, not the future: 'Is hewn down, and cast into the fire;' not, shall be hewn down, &c. The fruitless person shall as certainly be in hell as if he were there already; therefore promises and threatenings, though future, are delivered to us as present. As, 'To us a Son is born,' Isa. ix. 6, and xxi. 9, 'Babylon is fallen.'

4. The universality of the persons: 'Every tree that bringeth not

forth good fruit.' Every man, whatever his profession may be, or his hopes are, or his privileges have been, if he bring not forth good fruit, he is hewn down, and cast into the fire. The doctrine being thus proved by Scripture, I shall proceed to the explication of it in several particulars.

(1.) I shall speak to the nature of them, and shew what sins of omission are.

(2.) To the danger of them.

(3.) To the reasons why they are so damnable.

CHAPTER XIX.

The nature of sins of omission in general.

First, Concerning the first, *i.e.*, the nature of them; I shall speak to one more generally, and two more particularly.

1. By the several distinctions of these sins.

2. By their agreement with, and difference from, sins of commission.

(1.) More generally, a sin of omission is a neglect of some duty commanded us in the word of God.

In every command there is a precept and a prohibition: a precept enjoining, and a prohibition forbidding; a precept enjoining some duty, and a prohibition forbidding the contrary. The neglect of doing what the precept enjoins is a sin of omission, and the doing what the precept forbids is a sin of commission.

The truth is, in every commission there is an omission, as in every deadly disease somewhat of a fever; for in every commission, as in drunkenness, or oppression, or uncleanness, there is a neglect or omission of the duty commanded, as temperance, charity, and chastity. But those we most properly call sins of omission, which are extrinsicate from sins of commission, as not praying, not reading the word, not believing, not feeding the hungry, &c. But to speak strictly, there is no sin but sins of omission; for all sin consists in privation of due rectitude or deficiency, and coming short of the rule. Though the commands are generally delivered by way of negation, partly because of the proneness of men to commit those sins that are forbidden, and God would, by his negative command, curb and keep them in—thou shalt not, &c., thou shalt not, &c.; partly because negative commands bind more strongly than the affirmative. The affirmative *obligant semper*, but not

ad semper; but the negative bind *semper et ad semper*, as the schoolmen speak. The affirmative bind us always—*i.e.*, there is no time wherein it can be said that they are of no force—but not to all times. I am always bound to pray, but I am not bound to pray at all times. I am bound always to speak truth, but I am not bound to speak all truth at all times. But negative commands bind always, and at all times, as, 'Thou shalt not kill;' 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' These bind every moment of a man's life; I mean, every moment of his life these sins are to be forborne—they are at no time lawful. Though I say the commands are delivered *negativè* for the most part—viz., eight of them—yet we must understand that all the negative commands of God include their affirmative, as, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me;' this includes, Thou shalt have me for thy God, thou shalt know me, love me, fear me, trust me, and worship me as thy God. And when God saith, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image,' &c., this includes, Thou shalt worship me according to my will revealed in my word. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' this includes, Thou shalt use reverently all my names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not kill,' this includes, Thou shalt use all lawful means for the preservation of thine own and thy neighbour's life. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery,' this includes, Thou shalt, by all just ways, maintain thine own and thy neighbour's chastity, in thought, word, and deed. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not steal,' this includes, Thou shalt be true, faithful, and just in all thy contracts and dealings with others; restore what is ill-gotten, be diligent in thy calling, and endeavour the furtherance of thy own and thy neighbour's estate by all just ways. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour,' this includes, Thou shalt, to thy power, promote truth in thyself and others, maintain thine own and thy neighbour's good name. When God saith, 'Thou shalt not covet,' &c., this includes, Thou shalt be fully satisfied with thine own condition, and desire and delight in thy neighbour's prosperity. Thus the negative commands of God include their affirmative; so that, to depart from the evil forbidden is not to keep these laws, unless also we practise the duties commanded. The neglect of any of them is a sin of omission.

CHAPTER XX.

Three distinctions about sins of omission.

(2.) I shall speak more particularly, and explain these sins—

1. By these distinctions.

2. By their agreement with, and difference from, sins of commission.

First, These sins of omission are to be distinguished in regard of substance, manner, or measure.

1. When a duty is omitted in regard of the matter of it, as when men pray not, give not to the poor, hear not the word, &c., these omit the substance of the duty. Of such as those God complains: 'There is none that looketh after God,' Rom. iii. 11. And again: 'They will not hear the law of the Lord,' Isa. xxx. 9. 'And he that turneth away his ears from the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard,' Prov. xxi. 13. These are most deeply guilty before God. They shew their utter contempt of him, and openly manifest it to others, when they omit to relieve the poor, to pray in their families, or to attend public praying and preaching; hereby they are scandalous and offensive. They grieve the godly: 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because the wicked forsake thy laws,' Ps. cxix.; and they harden the wicked. When ungodly men see others neglect all religion, they are encouraged in their atheism and irreligion, and presuming others are wise, and that themselves shall fare as well as others. As it was said of those, Ezek. xiii. 22, so it may be said of these, 'They strengthen the hands of the wicked.' Again, these are guilty in all respects. They who offend in the matter of a command by neglecting the duty itself in the substance thereof, offend in the manner and measure also; but they who offend in the manner and measure, may not offend in the matter.

2. When the omission is in regard of the manner of the duties' performance, as when men do pray, but they pray not uprightly, with the heart: Jer. xii. 2, 'Thou art nigh their mouths, but far from their reins.' Nor earnestly, with their whole heart, and with all their heart, and all the powers of their souls, as the precept is, Jer. xxix. 13, and that prayer to which the promise is annexed, James v. 16; but pray as if they prayed not, formally, and customarily, and carelessly, scarce hearing themselves; and no wonder, then, if God hear them not. They pray not reverently, with the

awe of God upon their spirits, but are rash in their words, and irreverent in their hearts, Eccles. v. 1, 2. So when men give alms, but do not give cheerfully, with a free, willing, ready heart: 'For God loves a cheerful giver,' 2 Cor. ix. 17. Nor seasonably, when it may do most good: Prov. iii. 28, 'Say not to thy neighbour, Go, and come again to-morrow; when thou hast it by thee.' So when men hear the word, but hear not awfully, in the fear of God, as in the presence of God: Acts x. 33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things commanded thee of God;' neither hear believingly, giving their assent to what they hear, and applying it to their own souls: 'The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it,' Heb. iv. 2. These, and suchlike, though they are not guilty of omission in regard of the matter of a duty, yet they are guilty of omission in regard of the manner of it. Though they do the thing commanded, yet they do it not as it is commanded, and so are guilty of the breach of a positive law and command.

3. When the omission is in regard of the measure of the duty, as when a man gives alms, but not answerable to his estate; though God hath filled his belly with hidden treasures, and waters of a full cup are wrung out to him, and he is able to give pounds to poor indigent families, he puts them off with a few pence, or at most shillings, this is an omission in regard of the measure. God expects charitable contributions from men, answerable to his bounty to them: 1 Cor. xvi. 2, 'Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.' According to the measure of the divine mercy to us, such should be the measure of our charity to others. According to the seed thrown into the earth is the crop returned by the good ground. Therefore to make scanty returns, when we have large receipts, is a sin of omission; so when men pray, but not with that frequency which they might and ought. The command is, to pray continually, to pray without ceasing, to pray evermore.

Which must include at least frequent, *i.e.*, daily prayer, each morning and evening; but some men pray, but it is only at certain seasons, now and then, by fits and starts. Some pray only upon the Lord's days, as if they had liberty all the working days to be atheists, and neglect the owning of the great God. Others pray only under some affliction; and as patients to their physician, never go to God but when they cannot tell what to do without him. So the Jews, in their affliction, 'they will seek me early,' Hosea v. 15.

'When he smote them, then they sought him; but their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant,' Ps. lxxviii. 34, 37. Unevenness of pulse argues a distempered body, so doth unevenness in duties a distempered soul. In their trouble they will pour out a prayer. When troubles are on them, they will make bold to trouble God, and call him up for their help. God expects frequency of application to him every day, and greater frequency of those that have more time, and fewer obstacles and impediments than others. Now the putting God off with applications to him, and acknowledgments of him, once a week, instead of every day, and much under affliction, instead of doing it in all conditions, and at all seasons; or putting him off with morning prayer only, instead of morning and evening prayer, or with family prayer only, when we should also pray in our closets daily; these are sins of omission, in regard of the measure of the duty.

Secondly, These sins of omission are either partial or total.

Total omissions are, when men wholly neglect the duties commanded; as when they altogether cast off praying, and hearing, and giving alms, and examining their own hearts: Ps. xiv. 3, 4, 'They are all gone aside; there is none that doeth good: they call not upon God.' A man may read the word atheist in the foreheads of these men. They carry about them, wherever they go, the sign and mark of condemnation. They please themselves possibly that they do not abound in scandalous sins of commission, not considering that they may be guilty of self-murder, as well by starving or not feeding their souls, as by stabbing or poisoning their souls.

2. Partial omissions are, when men do sometimes perform the duties commanded, but not with that constancy which they ought: Job xv. 4, 'Thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God,' *i.e.*, Thou imprisonest prayer, and dost not afford it the liberty it formerly had; it was wont to appear every day openly, but now it is kept in, and shews itself but seldom.

Thirdly, Sins of omission are distinguished into external or internal omissions.

1. External omissions are a neglect of the outside, as I may call it, of the command.

2. Internal omissions are the neglect of the inside of the command. We must know, that in every command there is an *extra* and an *intra*, an outside and an inside; somewhat that concerns the hands and conversation, somewhat that concerns the heart and affections. As, for example, in the fourth commandment, of sanctifying the Sabbath, there God commands us to spend the whole time

of his day, except so much as the works of necessity and mercy call for, in religious exercises, and the duties of his own worship, as praying, reading, hearing, singing, &c. Now the bare performance of these duties is the outside of the command, and he who doth them, though customarily, obeys the command literally; but the sanctifying the name of God in these duties, and the performance of them with reverence, humility, faith, love, joy, according to the several duties and several parts of them, is the inside of the command; and he alone that performeth these duties in such a manner obeyeth the law spiritually. The neglect of the former is an external omission, for which God threatens families and nations: 'Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name,' Jer. x. 25. They who will not deprecate the wrath of God, must feel it; and they who will not entreat his favour, must go without it. So the not casting the incestuous person out of the church, was an external omission, 1 Cor. v. 2. The neglect of the latter, *i.e.*, of performing Sabbath duties in the forementioned manner, is an internal omission. Thus God complains of his people, that though they prayed, and possibly made long prayers, yet God counts their prayers as no prayers for their internal omissions: 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.' They put up, it may be, some lazy petitions, but they pour out no hearty desires; nay, God curseth men for doing his work negligently: Jer. xlviii. 10, 'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.'

CHAPTER XXI.

The agreement and difference between sins of omission and sins of commission.

2. It will further explain these sins of omission, to consider the difference between omissions and commissions, as also their agreement.

(1.) They agree in the authority forbidding them. The same God forbids each sin; he that saith, 'Thou shalt not kill,' the same saith, 'Thou shalt serve me diligently,' Exod. xx.; Jer. xlviii. 10; Mat. xxii. 37; 'With all thy heart,' Mat. vii. 13.

(2.) They are both against the same particular command. In the same command wherein he forbids theft, he commands diligence in our callings, and the use of all lawful means for the increase of our own estates; in the same law wherein he forbids uncleanness, he com-

mands care and endeavour to preserve our own and our neighbour's chastity.

(3.) They are both a privation of that rectitude which is required by the law to the goodness of every action. For if *malitia moralis non est quid positivum*, if there be nothing positive in the formal nature of sin, according to the schoolmen—as there can be nothing positive in it, unless we will make God the author of it—but a want of conformity to the law, then every commission is an omission in this respect, and so they agree in their formal nature.

(4.) They agree in their fruit and effect. Sins of commission exclude heaven, and condemn to hell: 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor drunkards, nor covetous, shall inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 9; and so do sins of omission, as the text doth abundantly prove.

The difference between sins of omission and sins of commission consisteth,

1. In that sins of commission are against a negative law, and sins of omission are against an affirmative law. Oppression is against a negative law: 'Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbour; thou shalt not oppress a stranger.' Neglect of charity is against an affirmative law: 'Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow, turn not thou away,' Mat. v. 42.

2. They differ in this: every commission proceeds originally from a sin of omission, but sins of omission do not proceed originally from sins of commission. All sin springeth from this, the departure of the heart from God, Jer. ii. 5; Heb. iii. 12, and the want of true love to, and fear of, his majesty, 1 John v. 3, John xv., which are sins of omission. Where there is no love to God, there is no care to forbear what he forbids: John xiv. 24, 'He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings;' and where there is no fear of God, all manner of wickedness will abound, Ps. xxxvi. 1, 2. David concludes a wicked man's omission from his sins of commission; the 'transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes,' *i.e.*, His scandalous practices, and sins of commission, tell me that he is guilty of inward omissions, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. He who casteth off fear, will soon let the reins loose to all licentiousness: 'They who called not on God will devour Jacob, and make waste his dwelling-place,' Jer. x. 25; no sin comes amiss to them, Rom. iii. 9–14. The monstrous, horrid, unnatural sins of the heathen had their beginning in sins of omission. When they

knew God, *i.e.*, by the light of nature, which plainly speaks a deity, they glorified him not as God; *i.e.*, did not love him, fear him, trust in him, honour him as God, neither were thankful, did not acknowledge their engagements to him, for their noble beings, and manifold mercies. These were sins of omission; but what followeth upon them? truly unnatural bestiality, unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, pride, &c., Rom. i. 21, to the end. Men leave the fountain of living waters, and then hew themselves broken cisterns which will hold no water, Jer. ii. 13.

The first and great sin of mankind proceeded from an omission. Adam's heart was turned from God by unbelief, I humbly conceive, before ever his hand touched, or tongue tasted, the forbidden fruit. But now sins of omission do not proceed originally from sins of commission: James i. 14, 15, 'But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'

3. They differ in this, that sins of commission are founded in some act or habit; sins of omission only in the soul, without acts or habits.[1] 1. There is somewhat positive about sins of commission, but nothing about sins of omission, and that is the reason. 2. As drunkenness is an immoderate use of beer or wine, here is an act of the creature, and much positive about this sin, though nothing positive in the sin itself. So in theft, another sin of commission, there is somewhat positive about the taking away our neighbour's goods, and keeping them as our own; but in sins of omission there is nothing positive; as in not praying, not hearing, not believing, not giving to the poor, there is nothing positive, no acts, but a neglect of acts required. Sins of omission are wholly privative, and have nothing of positivity in them.

4. They differ in this, that sins of commission are more scandalous in the eyes of men than sins of omission. I do not say sins of omission are always less heinous than sins of commission—I shall prove by and by they may be more heinous—but that they are less scandalous. Sins of commission, as drunkenness, uncleanness, theft, swearing, murder; these make a great noise in the world, are taken notice of by all, and with the snail, leave a slime and filth behind them, wheresoever they are: but sins of omission, as not praying in our closets, not examining our own hearts, not relieving the poor and needy, not bringing up our children in the nurture and admoni-

[1] Barlow Exercit.

tion of the Lord, &c.; these are more still and quiet, observed by few or none.

5. They differ in this, that sins of omission are the aversion of the heart from God, and sins of commission are the conversion of the heart to the creature, or somewhat below God. Omission turns the heart from God; hence we read of man's going far from God, Jer. ii. 5, and of their departing away from the living God, Heb. iii. 12; which is not meant in regard of local motion, for so none can depart from God, Ps. cxxxix. 2-5, but in regard of their inward carnal affections, and disobedient conversations: Jer. xvii. 5, 'Whose heart departeth from the Lord.' Commissions are a turning to the creature: 'whose heart is after coveteousness.' 'They imagine mischief in their hearts,' Ps. cxl. 2; Eccles. ix. 3, 'The heart of the sons of men is full of evil.'

Having spoken to the nature of sins of omission in general, and more particularly by their several distinctions, and their agreement with, and difference from, sins of commission, I come to the second thing promised in the explication of the doctrine, and that is the danger of them.

CHAPTER XXII.

The danger of sins of omission, in the heinous nature of them, and their offensiveness to God.

Secondly, The danger of sins of omission. Though men are ready to conceive that sins of omission, because they make no great cry in the world, are but infirmities, are venial sins, and are not much to be regarded, as having little of danger to the soul in them, yet the contrary will appear plainly, if we consider these particulars.

1. The malignity and sinfulness of them speaks their danger. The more venom and poison there is in any cup or dish, the more dangerous it must needs be; the more sinfulness there is in any sin, the more hazardous it is to the soul. Now I shall shew the sinfulness of omissions.

(1.) They are most against the mind and will of God. Those sins are the greatest which most cross the will of the lawgiver, for sin is a transgression of the law or mind of God; and every one knoweth that the mind of God is more in the precept or affirmative part of the law, than in the prohibition or negative part of it. The precept or performance of the duty commanded is the main thing;

the prohibition is, as it were, accidental, in order to our obedience to the precept;[1] therefore sins of omission being against the substance and principal part of the command, and so most directly against that which is the special mind of the lawgiver, must needs be the greatest sins. It is more good to do good, than not to do evil. Omissions are not to be esteemed bare negations or privations, but as breaches of a positive law, wherein the mind of God is most discovered. Now how great a sin, and how dangerous is it to cross the mind of God! surely it is bad thwarting him that can cast body and soul into hell: 'I say unto you,' saith Christ, 'fear him,' Mat. x. 28.

(2.) Sins of omission are the ground of, and make way for, sins of commission.[2] The want of love to God, and our not believing his word, which are sins of omission, are the ground of all abominations. When a man once casteth off daily reading the word, and seeking God by prayer, or performs those duties coldly and carelessly, he throws himself out of God's protection, and so becomes a lackey to the devil, and a tame slave to every lust to trample on and tyrannise over at pleasure: Ps. xiv. 3, 4, 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' *Negligentiam in orando semper aliqua notabilis transgressio sequitur*, saith one: Always some notable sin followeth upon slothfulness in prayer.

David's not watching his eyes and heart, and his not employing his time better at that hour of the day, brought forth drunkenness, murder, adultery, lying, &c. Some sins of omission are like great men, that never go without many followers: admit their persons, you must admit their long train which they bring with them. So a Gad, a whole troop of ugly lusts, will throng in upon our neglect of one duty.

Not doing good, fits the heart for doing evil. The ground not sown with good corn doth naturally of its own accord bring forth evil weeds. Indeed, it is impossible for him that doth no good, not to do evil: 'He that doth not gather with Christ, scattereth; and he that is not with me is against me,' Mat. xii. 30. He that fights not for his prince in a day of battle, is his enemy; and that servant who helps not his master in harvest, hinders him. Not to save a life when we may, is to destroy and murder it. The negative Christian will quickly fall to be a positive atheist and heathen. If the heart be empty of good, and swept clean of grace, the unclean

[1] Mens legis est lex.

[2] *Vide ante*, the second difference between sins of omission and commission.

spirit will quickly take up his lodging in it. Besides, God doth often judicially give up them to commit evil, who refuse to do good: 'Because they received not the truth in the love of it, (here is a sin of omission,) God gave them up to strong delusions, that they might believe a lie,' &c., 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11. Now how great and dangerous is this sin, that ushers in so many sins! Alas! one sin is too weighty for thy soul to bear; how heavy then will that whole rabble and regiment of sins be, that one sin of omission may bring along with it! If I live in sins of omission, sins of commission will follow both naturally and judicially.

(3.) Sins of commission do exceedingly grieve the Spirit of God. Indeed every sin is offensive to the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of holiness, as directly contrary to its nature; but the Spirit of God sets a particular special brand and mark upon these sins as grievous to him: 'Follow that which is good. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings,' 1 Thes. v. 15–19. Observe, the duties are all positive (the neglect whereof is a sin of omission) to which he exhorts them, if they would not quench the Spirit. The Spirit is not only grieved, but also quenched, by sins of omission. Fire may be quenched by withdrawing fuel from it, as well as by throwing water on it. By scandalous sins of commission, we throw water on this heavenly flame to quench it; but by neglecting to pray, and to attend on prophesying, and such sins of omission, we withdraw fuel from it, and thereby put it out. When the Israelites would not hear the voice of God, they are said to grieve his Holy Spirit, Ps. xcv.; and when they believed not his word, the wonders that he wrought, they are said to vex his Holy Spirit, Isa. lxiii. 10, with Num. xiv. 11, and xx. 12: 'Then they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit.' Not to obey God is to disobey him; not to be loyal to him is to be rebellious; now hereby they vexed his Holy Spirit. Now how great a sin, and how dangerous is it to grieve the Spirit of God! the size or measure of sin is to be taken from the Majesty slighted, disobeyed, and offended by it. The Spirit is God, an infinite, boundless being, whom these sins of omission grieve and vex. Again, how dangerous is it to grieve and drive the Spirit from us! It is the Spirit that must enable us to our duties, Rom. viii. 26; direct us in our walkings, Ps. cxliii. 10; comfort us in our sorrows, John. xiv. 16; Isa. lxv. 1-3. It is the Spirit that is the Spirit of grace and holiness, Zech. xii. 10; Rom. i. 4, and must work them in our hearts, if ever we be gracious and holy, 1 Pet. i. 2. It is the Spirit must strengthen us with might in our inward

man, to keep the commandments of God, Eph. iii. 16; Ezek. xxxvi. 27. It is the Spirit that is the earnest of our inheritance, the first-fruits of our eternal, blessed harvest, and that must seal us up unto the day of redemption, Eph. i. 13, 14; Rom. viii.; Eph. iv. 30. How great a sin, and how dangerous therefore is it to grieve this Spirit, and by sins of omission to incense him to withdraw from us, without whom we are unable unto any good, and indeed exposed to all evil.

2. The danger of these sins will appear by their offensiveness to God. Since our felicity depends on the favour of God, and our misery on his anger, (hell itself being but his wrath ever to come, 1 Thes. i. 10,) those sins which are highly provoking to God must be very dangerous. If in his favour be life, Ps. xxx. 5, and his wrath be worse than death, Ps. xc. 11, I had need to beware how I provoke him to jealousy. Now the not believing God, which is a sin of omission, is called the provocation: Ps. xcv. 8, 9, 'Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works.' This provocation was their not believing his word, for all the wonders he had wrought for them: 'They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold he smote the rock, that waters gushed out; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel: because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation,' Ps. lxxviii. 19–23.

It will appear how provoking sins of omission are to God by these three particulars.

(1.) By his frequent reprehensions and complaints of men for them. He blames men for not sacrificing, Mal. iii. 18; for not mourning, 1 Cor. v.; and sharply reproves for not receiving correction: Jer. ii. 30, 'In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction;' for not grieving when smitten, Jer. v. 3; for not seeking God, Isa. ix. 13. Nay, observe what special notice he takes of, and how sadly he aggravates, their omissions: Jer. iii. 7, 'I said after she had done all these things, (*i.e.*, gone up upon every high mountain, and upon every green tree,) Turn thou unto me. But she turned not.' Here he complains of Israel's omission in not turning to him; but mark how he accents Judah's omission, who knew what Israel had done, and how God had put her away: ver. 8, 'Yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not,' the dreadful doom of Israel struck no awe into the heart of Judah. And ver.

10, 'And yet for all this (that Israel hath committed, and been severely punished for) her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with the whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.' Here was an omission internal, or in the manner of her conversation; it was not sincere, but with dissimulation.

(2.) By his severe comminations and threatenings denounced against those that are guilty of omissions. He curseth those that deny him their help in a day of battle, and that come not forth to help the Lord against the mighty, Judges v. 23; he curseth those that are not diligent about his work, Jer. xlviii. 10. And believe it, his curse is effectual, not like the discharge of a piece with powder only, which doth no execution. Those whom he curseth are cursed indeed: his curse, like lightning, blasteth and withereth wherever it cometh. 'I cursed his habitation,' saith Eliphaz, not as a private malediction of his own spirit, but as a pious prediction of God's Spirit. Now mark what followeth upon God's cursing the wicked man's habitation, Job v. 2-4. His house is by this breath of God tumbling to the ground presently. 'His children (that should be the honour and support of it) are far from safety,' ver. 3; 'They are crushed in the gate, and there is none to deliver them,' ver. 4. 'Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up his substance.' His estate, which is a second thing requisite to the outward glory of a family, that is seized on, and snatched from him. So God threateneth multitudes with his wrath (which is so terrible, so intolerable, that none can stand before it, Ps. cxlvii. 8; that mountains are moved, rocks are rent in pieces, the foundations of the earth tremble at it; yea, that God's own people are ready to be distracted at it, Ps. lxxxviii. 3-5, for a sin of omission, for not calling on his name, Jer. x. 25.

God threateneth to cut a man off from his people (which includes either a cutting off from the society of God's people here and hereafter, as Gen. xvii. 14, or of being cut off out of the land of the living by the sword of the magistrate, Exod. xxx. 33, or both, as some think) for a mere omission. 'But a man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from his people,' Num. ix. 13.

(3.) It appears that sins of omission are highly provoking to God, by the execution of his judgments on them that are guilty of them. His works as well as his word speak his great indignation against these sins. Saul lost his kingdom for not killing Agag and the

best of the flock: 'Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being king,' saith Samuel to him, 1 Sam. xv. 23, 26, 28. Ahab omitted to kill Benhadad, and lost his life for it: 1 Kings xx. 42, 'Because thou hast let go a man out of thy hand, whom I appointed to utter destruction, thy life shall go for his life.' Eli was a good man, and as much in God's favour, but by not reproving his sons he so far incurred God's anger, that he lost his two wicked fondlings in a day, and the priesthood for ever, 1 Sam. iii. 12, 13, &c. Moses was God's special friend and favourite: 'And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend,' Exod. xxxiii. 11. 'And the Lord said to Moses, Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.' Yet when this Moses is guilty of an omission, that he doth not believe God, nor sanctify his name in the eyes of the children of Israel, he is excluded the temporal Canaan, Num. xx. 12. Though Moses was taken up to the mount, to converse with God forty days together, when Aaron and all the people must stay below; though Moses was honoured to see the commands written with God's own hand; though Moses was taken into a rock, while God passed before him, that he might hear his name, 'the Lord, the Lord God gracious,' &c., proclaimed, and see his back parts; though God was pleased to confer with Moses, as one friend with another; yet when this Moses comes to be guilty of such an omission, he is denied liberty to enter into the land flowing with milk and honey. Nay, though this Moses begs so hard, 'I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon,' yet God was so provoked by his omission, that though he had heard him once and again for greater things on the behalf of others, Exod. xxxiii. 11-15; Num. xiv. 10, he would not hear him in this small request for himself: 'But his wrath was kindled, and he would not hear me: and said, Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto me of this matter,' Deut. iii. 25, 26.

Nay, how angry was Christ with the man who had not a wedding garment at his supper! how severe is his sentence! how dreadful his doom! 'And when the king came in to see his guests, he saw there a man which had not a wedding garment,' Mat. xxii. Though but one in a crowd, Christ spied him.

1. Here is his transgression. We do not read that the man slighted the invitation, and denied to come, as they in ver. 5, nor that he entreated his servants spitefully, and slew them, as those, ver. 6; we do not read that the man came to the feast in a drunken fit, or reproached and abused either the master or guests,

but only omitted to bring with him a wedding garment, which some say is charity, others obedience; he was a professor, but without godly practices; but I suppose is meant Christ, and the graces of the Spirit, which are compared to a garment, Rom. xiii.; Col. iii.; Eph. iv. 23, 24, 'And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man.'

2. Here is the man's self-conviction: ver. 12, ἐφιμώθη, he was muzzled; the same word is used of muzzling the mouth of a beast, whereby it is unable to open it to eat, 1 Cor. ix. 9. His conscience was that which put a muzzle on his mouth, being convinced that he might and ought to have procured a garment before he had gone to the feast. They who have a form, and no power of godliness, who make a show without any substance of religion, will be speechless when Christ shall come to reckon with them.

Here is his condemnation: ver. 13, 'Bind him hand and foot.' When malefactors are cast in law, either by their own confession, or the evidence of others, the jailer puts new fetters and shackles on them, to secure their persons against sentence and execution, lest they should make an escape. 'Bind him hand and foot:' make sure of him. The sinner shall have no power of resisting, or possibility of flying from divine severity. And ἐκβάλετε, *ejicite*, cast him forth. Cast him out as a vile, loathsome, abominable wretch, unfit for company, whom I hate to behold, into utter darkness, εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον, a prison, a dungeon, where there is no light, a condition most remote from joy and comfort; such darkness as hath a blackness joined to it, Jude 13. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; weeping for the extremity of their own pain, and gnashing of teeth out of envy at others' happiness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The danger of sins of omission, in their destructiveness to man, and our proneness to overlook them.

3. The danger of sins of omission will appear by their destructiveness to men. The more wrong and injury any sin doth us, the more danger is in it. Now what hath been already spoken doth abundantly evince this. If omissions are so great sins, that they most directly cross the mind of the law, and make way for all sins of commission, and exceedingly grieve the Spirit of God, they must

needs be dangerous and destructive to men. If God himself blame them so sharply, threaten them so severely, and punish them so grievously who are guilty of such sins, then these sins must be very injurious to us. But it will further appear if you consider that they cause,—

1. The judgments of God on men, in regard of their bodies or external comforts. He punisheth many with extreme penury, for not being diligent in their particular callings. Their idleness, which is a sin of omission, clothes them with rags, Prov. xxiii. 21. Again, 'the idle soul shall suffer hunger,' Prov. xix. 15. How doth experience prove the truth of this. Many begin the world, as we say, with considerable estates, who, in a few years, for lack of care and industry in their employs, have wasted all. The idle man may call the prodigal brother. Besides, these sins of omission are punished with a temporal destruction. The Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not, Jude 5. Israel was God's own people, his peculiar treasure, Exod. xix. 5; a people nigh unto him, Ps. cxlviii. 14; incomparable for this, Deut. iv. 7, and other privileges, Rom. ix. 4. Yet when guilty of this omission, God would not spare them, but destroyed them. No privileges can exempt from punishment. God may forsake his tabernacle at Shiloh; deliver his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemies' hand, if they will not believe him, if they will not obey him, Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61.

2. A judicial tradition to spiritual judgments. Of all judgments, none in this world are so dreadful as those that are spiritual; bodily judgments touch the flesh, but these the spirit. When God would speak and wreak his anger against a person or people to the utmost, he doth it in this way, by giving them up to their own wickedness. When he would strike Ephraim under the fifth rib, and kill him at a blow, it is by this judgment: 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,' Hosea iv. 17. He is given to idolatry, let him take his fill of it, and see what the end will be; he is fond of lies and vanities, and delights in prostituting himself to their embraces, let him alone. Let none disturb him or recall him; let no mercy, no misery, no means, no ministry ever hinder him in the prosecution of his lusts, or stop him in his course, much less be effectual for his repentance and amendment. In temporal judgments, God acts the part of a father, to whip his child, that he may reclaim him from his errors, and be fit to inherit his estate. But in spiritual, God acts the part of a judge, to deliver the malefactor over to execution. In the former, he prunes the tree, that it

may bring forth fruit, and so continue in his garden to his joy and delight; but in the latter, he leaves the tree as unsound and barren, to be cut down for the fire. Now sins of omission cause God to deliver men up to these judgments. God calls upon Israel to hear and obey him, they will not: 'But my people would not hearken to my voice; Israel would none of me.' What was the result of their refusal? 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts: and they walked in their own counsels,' Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12. God doth not testify his anger for their contempt of him by sending plague, or flames, or wild beasts among them. He doth not say, Well, since they thus slight my authority, I will be avenged on them to purpose; I will give them up to the sword, or famine, or racking diseases, or greedy devouring lions, which would have been sad and grievous; but he executes on them a far more sad and grievous judgment, when he saith, 'So I gave them up to their own hearts' lusts: and they walked in their own counsels.' God's leaving one soul to one lust,[1] is far worse than leaving him to all the lions in the world. Alas! it will tear the soul worse than a lion can do the body, and rend it in pieces, when there is none to deliver it. God's giving them up to their own wills, that they walked in their own counsels, is in effect a giving them up to eternal wrath and woe.

3. The destructiveness of sins of omission to the souls of men appears in that they render the condition of men desperate, and without remedy. Sins of commission wound the soul dangerously, but sins of omission make the state of the patient hopeless and desperate. Sins of commission are directly against the law, and so bind the sinner over to its curse; but sins of omission are directly against the gospel, and thereby hinder the patient's cure, Gal. iii. 20; John iii. 36. He that hath broken the precepts of the law is liable to its punishment; but yet this sinner may fly to the gospel, as his city of refuge, and lay hold on Christ, there tendered, for pardon and life. But by some sins of omission, he rendereth the gospel ineffectual for his good, and himself incapable of the good things promised in it. Faith and repentance are the two conditions upon which all the exceeding rich and precious promises depend; so that by not believing, and not repenting, which are sins of omission, men deny themselves all the benefit and advantage of the gospel: 'He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned,' Mark xvi. 16. 'He upbraided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe to thee, Chorazin! woe to thee, Bethsaida!' &c., Mat. xi.

[1] Qu. 'one's soul to one's lust'?—ED.

21–23. Sins of commission make the wound, and sins of omission keep off that plaster which alone can heal it. Sins of commission plunge us into a bottomless gulf of misery, and sins of omission stop the current of that mercy that alone can relieve and succour us. These sinners are like men in swoons, gasping for breath, and ready to expire, yet shut their mouths, and fasten their teeth together, to keep out those cordials that alone can recall them to life.

4. The danger of sins of omission will appear by our proneness to slight and neglect them. If sins of omission are of so deadly a nature, as most to contradict the will of God, and so highly provoking to him, and so mortally destructive to us, then the more we slight this great enemy, the more dangerous it is to us. A weak enemy, and an enemy that can do us little harm, may be slighted without great danger; but when an enemy is so powerful, so deadly, so damnable, our contempt of him is a great advantage to him, and a great disadvantage to us; for by this means he falls upon us disarmed and unprepared for him. Pompey slighted Cæsar, when news first came to Rome of his marching into Italy with his army, and said, That if he did but stamp with his foot, he should therewith fetch soldiers enough out of all parts to subdue Cæsar, and so made small preparation to resist him, which was his own and the commonwealth's destruction. Truly, thus men are apt to slight sins of omission, and thereby to undo themselves. As it is said of Joab, he spake kindly to Amasa, and made as if he would kiss him: 'But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, that he died,' 2 Sam. xx. 9, 10. Thus sin of omission is familiar with us, and pretends rather love and kindness than any hurt to us; for in all sin there is a deceitfulness, Heb. iii. 13; and we taking no heed to the sword in its hand, to its malignant killing nature, but slighting it, as if it were venial, are destroyed by it.

And there are three reasons why we are so apt to overlook sins of omission:

1. Because conscience doth not so soon check us for them, as for sins of commission. If a man commit murder, or adultery, or theft, his conscience is ready to fly in his face, and thunder in his ears, as it did with Cain after the slaughter of his brother, that he cried out, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear;' and he went up and down trembling, as some think, all his days, Gen. iv. 13, 14. But men may neglect praying, or reading, or charity, especially in regard of the manner of doing them, and conscience will

take little notice of it. Such omissions may pass with little or no regard. Cain in the offering he brought to God, neglected probably to bring the best of the fruit of the ground, however to offer it with an upright believing heart; but we read not that he took notice of these omissions, though he did of God's manifest disrespecting his offering, Gen. iv. 3–5. It is ordinary with some moral men, if they fall into ill company sometime by accident, and are made drunk, to be ashamed of it, and much troubled for it; but these men can live in their families without prayer and Scripture, and neglect to teach their children and servants the ways of God; and yet these omissions do not at all disturb them—they go up and down, and eat, and drink, and sleep, as merrily as if they obeyed the whole will of God. Job tells you of those that bid God depart from them, that desire not, nor endeavour to know him; that cast off prayer to him, and all his service, as fruitless; and yet these men, guilty of such great and gross omissions, could take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ, and spend their days in wealth and mirth, Job xxi. 12–15. These negative sins are still and silent, and make none or little noise in the ears of conscience; but positive sins are more clamorous. We read of those that were guilty of bribery and oppression under their guise and mask of religion, and how they are stabbed and frighted! 'A dreadful sound is in their ears, trouble and anguish make them afraid. They believe not that they shall come out of darkness,' Job xv. 21-24, compared with 34th and 35th verses. How many do we know in places where we live, who, if they should rob or wrong their neighbours, would hardly enjoy any peace or quietness in their spirits, who can live cheerfully and contentedly day after day, nay, year after year, while all this while they rob God of that love, and fear, and trust which they owe him in their hearts, and of that open homage and allegiance which they owe him in their houses.

The reason hereof is, because sins of commission are most against natural light. In sins of omission there is no such actual disturbance, by which the free contemplation of the mind is hindered, as in sins of commission. Besides, foul acts of sin, as uncleanness and murder, &c., bring more shame, and cause more horror, than bare neglects of our duty. Conscience is not wont to take any great notice of external neglects, or of spiritual defects.

2. We are the more prone to overlook, and take no notice of sins of omission; as conscience is less troubled for them, so our Christian friends are not so apt to warn and admonish us of them, as of sins of commission. If a professor fall into some gross sin of com-

mission, as if he be overtaken with intemperance, or lying, or going beyond his neighbour, all the town or neighbourhood rings of it; his Christian friends hear and take notice of it, and out of love to his, and faithfulness to their own souls, admonish him of it, and endeavour, with the spirit of meekness, to bring him to repentance for it. But this professor may neglect prayer in his closet, reading and meditating on the word of God, examining his own heart, nay, possibly prayer in his family, and the instruction of those committed to his charge in the principles of religion, and his friends be wholly ignorant hereof, and so be all their days wanting to acquaint him with his sin herein. When David had been guilty of several sins of commission in the matter of Uriah, Nathan hears of it, for it seems to be the town talk, in that it is said 'That he caused the enemies of God to blaspheme,' ver. 14. And I suppose God's narration of it to him was rather a command or commission, for the manner of his reprehension of David, than of certifying him of that he was ignorant before; he goeth to him, and tells him thereof, and calls him to repentance for them, 2 Sam. xii. 1–10. But though David in all this time, likely nine months, for the child was born, ver. 14, had been guilty of many omissions, in not confessing his sin with sorrow and shame, in not begging pardon with faith and hope, and in several other particulars; yet Nathan takes no notice thereof in his speech to him, neither makes any mention of them.

3. We are the more prone to overlook sins of omission, because they are so near akin to intermissions, which are lawful and necessary. Affirmative precepts, as was said before, do not bind *ad semper;* I am bound to pray in my closet and family every day, but I am not bound to pray in either all the day. God commands me to mind the nourishing and refreshing my body, and to follow my particular calling, and as occasion is to visit the fatherless and afflicted; now because these intermissions or omissions for a time are allowed and commanded, men are apt to turn them, or to fall from them, into total omissions, and when they do so, to be little troubled for them. Because men may be excused from solemn religious duties three parts or more of the week-day, therefore they will neglect them altogether, and are insensible of their neglect. Commissions being never lawful, for the negative commands bind *ad semper*, therefore if men be guilty of them, they take the more notice of them, and lay them more to heart; but positive precepts being sometimes unseasonable, and binding but at some times—*i.e.*, the duties of them are to be performed but at some time—when in-

stead of our intermission there be an omission, we are ready to wink at it, and regard it at most but as an infirmity, which may require a pardon of course. If I may omit prayer and Scripture ten hours of the day, saith the subtle, wicked heart of man, why not eleven hours? and if eleven hours, what great hurt if it be omitted twelve hours, *i.e.*, the whole day, and the duty be not performed at all?

CHAPTER XXIV.

The reasons why sins of omission are damnable.

I come now to the third thing to be spoken to in the explication of this doctrine, and that is to give the reasons why Christ will condemn men at the great day to eternal torments for sins of omission.

Thirdly, The reasons of the doctrine why sins of omission are damnable.

Reas. 1. The great and grand reason is, because they are sins. Every sin is damnable: 'The wages of sin (as sin) is death,' temporal, spiritual, and eternal, Rom. vi. 23. Therefore these omissions, being sins as well as commissions, must of necessity be damnable to our souls. As there is bitterness in every sprig or branch of wormwood, and saltness in every drop or spoonful of sea-water, so there is death and hell, and wrath and damnation, in every sin. The wicked papists distinguish sins into venial and mortal, but they got that distinction from the devil, not from God. They have their seven deadly sins, but the Holy Ghost tells us all sins are deadly, without any distinction, Gal. iii. 10. Though one sin may be greater and more heinous than another, yet every sin is mortal. A pistol is less than a musket, and a musket than a cannon, but they are all of them killing: Ezek. xviii., 'The soul that sins shall die.' Under the word death is comprehended all the misery of this and the other world. Sin being a contempt of the authority, a violation of the law, and a slighting the love, of an infinite God, deserves all that privation of good, and infliction of evil, which this sentence of Christ includes, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' God cannot inflict a greater punishment, nor can a finite limited creature bear greater torments, than sin, being of infinite demerit, requires and calls for.

Now I have largely proved that omissions are sins as well as commissions; and to speak properly and exactly, there is no sin

but the sin of omission. For even in commissions, their sinfulness consisteth in their want of that goodness which the law requireth. Were there not a deficiency in them of somewhat which they ought to have, or a want of conformity to the law, there would be no sin in them. Yea, I have proved sins of omission in some respect greater sins, as more against the mind of the lawgiver, whose will consists rather in the affirmative than negative part of the command, and as the ground of sins of commission, and as more directly against the gospel than sins of commission. They are much mistaken who judge omissions pure privations, or mere negations, little other than nonentities; for omissions are transgressions of an affirmative command, and violations of a positive precept, and the greatest contradictions to the mind of the law, and therefore most justly liable to its curse. The apostle tells us what obedience the law requireth, and what the condition of such as fail therein is, Gal. iii. 10. 1. It requireth practical obedience; not hearing, or knowing, or speaking only of what is written in the book of the law, but doing it—'to do them.' It is doing that the law requireth: 'Do this and live,' &c. And it is doers that the law justifieth: Rom. ii. 13, 'Not the hearers of the law, but the doers thereof shall be justified.' Now under this doing, sins of omission are expressly forbidden, and those duties, the neglect of which are sins of omission, are commanded.

2. It requireth personal obedience: 'Every one.' It takes no notice of obedience by a proxy, or a surety, but requires it in our own persons. The law admits not a mediator.

3. Perfect obedience: 'In everything written in the book of the law.' It will not admit of the least deviation, of any one step awry, but presently curseth and condemneth for them. If any thought, word, or deed be never so little too light, it will not grant the least grain of allowance, but damneth for them.

4. It must be perpetual: 'That continueth not.' If in one day, one hour, one moment of his life he fail, he is undone. If a man could be obedient to the whole law all the time of his life, and should in his dying hour disobey it, the law would take no notice of all his former obedience, but send him to hell for his latter disobedience. For mark the state of those that yield not this perfect, personal, perpetual, practical obedience. Their condition is cursed: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' In the word *cursed*, all evil is included; so that omissions, or the neglect of those duties which the law requireth, being sins, they render the

creature liable to the curse, which is indeed all manner of misery here and hereafter.

Death and hell are the end of every sin, though they are not the end of every sinner; they are the reward of every evil work, though not the reward of every evil worker. Free grace in the blood of Christ doth sometimes interpose, and put in an exception to this general rule. The gospel accepted and pleaded is a bar to those rigorous proceedings of the law; therefore, though this reason will justify Christ, and condemn the sinner in the judgment of his own conscience, especially this sinner being under a covenant of works, yet I shall give farther reasons from the sinner's non-interest in the privileges of the gospel.

Reas. 2. Christ will condemn men at the last day to eternal torments for sins of omission, because they speak a man in a carnal, natural estate. The gospel, that is the only ark for a Christian to shelter his soul in against the flood of the law's curses, requireth a change of the nature and disposition as absolutely necessary to salvation. Christ, the great preacher and purchaser of the gospel, affirmeth solemnly, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he shall never see the kingdom of God,' John iii. 3. This is indispensably requisite, not only as a condition without which heaven may not be had in regard of God's pleasure, but also as a disposition without which heaven or happiness cannot be enjoyed in regard of the subject; for it is this that is meant by our being 'made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,' Col. i. 12. Again, the Holy Ghost tells us, that 'without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb. xii. 14. This holiness, as a due qualification of the agent in relation to the beatifical vision or sight of God, the blessed-making object, is necessary by the gospel. How often are the unregenerate and unsanctified by the Spirit of God doomed to hell, and excluded heaven, John iii. 18; Rev. xix., 'Into it can in no wise enter anything that is defiled or unclean.' Again, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' Ezek. xxxiii. 11; implying that death and destruction are the portion of the unconverted.

Now these sins of omission are evidences of a man's want of regeneration. Nay, there is much more evil in a state of sin than in an act of sin, which state of sin consisteth most in sins of omission. For this was the great evil and misery of the Ephesians by nature, Eph. ii. 12, that 'they were without God,' *i.e.*, were without any inward regard of him, or outward obedience to him. Sound conversion and saving repentance make clear work. As the

flood drowned all out of the ark, Noah's friends as well as others; so repentance destroys all sins, even sins of omission as well as commission. It loves none, it allows of none. Restraining grace will probably refuse the way of disobedience, but renewing grace will close the way of obedience. Those that are in a wicked and unregenerate state are characterised in Scripture from their sins of omission: 'The wicked through the pride of his heart will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts,' Ps. x. 4. 'The Lord hath a controversy with the land, because there is no mercy, nor truth, nor knowledge of God in the land,' Hosea iv. 1. Nay, the reign of sin, which ever speaks an unconverted and unregenerate estate, is as visible, if not more, in omissions than in commissions. As there is as high an act of authority, and sovereignty, and princely power in a negative voice, or denying such and such things to be done, as in a positive law, enjoining such and such things to be done; so the omission of what is good, or refusing to do what God commands, may speak sin reigning in the soul, as well as doing, or commanding to be done, what God hath forbidden. It is indeed the judgment of many, that a prince's negative voice is a greater part and mark of his royalty than any affirmative command of his; for a king may have power to command that which he hath no power to forbid. As he may and should enjoin his subjects to worship the true God, according to his revealed will, but he hath no power to forbid them. Thus in sins of omission, for a man to live without prayer, without the love and fear of God, without delight in him, and communion with him, without care of, and watchfulness over, his own heart and life, may be a greater sign of the reign of sin, and thereby of an unregenerate state, than the commission of some gross actual transgressions.

It is apparent that this man is under the power of lust, as a servant to it, Titus iii. 3; and under the dominion of the devil, 'carried captive by him at his will,' 2 Tim. ii. 26; and an unregenerate, unsanctified person; because he lives in disobedience to these positive laws of God. Whereas he that is born of God sinneth not, 1 John iii. 9, with his whole will; there is not a free, voluntary, cheerful submission of his will to the quiet, undisturbed dominion of sin. And he that is born of God hath a tender regard to the whole law: 'I have esteemed thy precepts concerning all things to be right; therefore I hate every false way,' Ps. cxix. 128. He hath respect to affirmative as well as negative precepts. He hath an equal uniform regard to all the law—to that part which

commands the doing good, as well as that part which forbids the doing evil. Therefore the man that lives in sins of omission is not born of God, and therefore incapable, by the gospel, of heaven, and so justly for this cause sentenced to hell.

CHAPTER XXV.

Further reasons why Christ at the great day will condemn men for sins of omission.

Reas. 3. Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, because those that live in such sins have no interest in himself. There is no way to escape hell but by the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thes. i. 10; 'Jesus that delivereth from the wrath to come.' There is no way to attain heaven but by Christ: 'I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish,' John x. 28.

As salvation is God's gift, Rom. vi. 23, so it is Christ's purchase: 'There is no name under heaven whereby men may be saved, but by the name of Christ,' Acts iv. 12. So that all who are without Christ, not interested in him, must of necessity perish: 'He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son hath not life,' 1 John v. 12. Those that are without Christ are unpardoned; all their sins are imputed to them, Eph. iv. 32; Rom. iii. 25. And wherever sin is imputed, it condemneth, Ezek. xviii. 3. Those that are not interested in Christ are children of the devil, John viii. 44, and children of wrath, Eph. ii. 2, 3. And such children must be with their father the devil, and under wrath for ever.

Now those that live in sins of omission have no interest in Christ. Our interest in Christ, and so in life, is by faith: 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,' Eph. iii. 17; Gal. ii. 20, 'I live by faith in the Son of God.' It is faith that causeth the union between Christ and the soul, and joins them together; by virtue of which union the Christian hath communion with Christ in his merits and righteousness, that his life, and death, and burial are the Christian's, are by God imputed to him, as if performed in his own person. Hence it is said that the Christian lives with Christ, is crucified with Christ, and buried with Christ, Rom. vi. 4. And the Christian is said to be the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. By this union with Christ, which is the fruit of faith, the Christian is made a son of God, Gal. iii. 26, and so 'an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17. As

a woman, by marriage being united and made one with a man, hath communion with him in his relations, honours, and estate; so the Christian, by faith made one with Christ, hath communion with him in his relations: 'Go tell my brethren, I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God,' John xx. 17. In his estate Christ is heir of all things, Heb. i. 2, and the believer is a joint-heir with him, as is before proved. Christ was the first-born among many brethren, and so the inheritance did belong to him, Col. i. 18. Believers are a congregation of first-born, and so the right of the inheritance is theirs, Heb. xii. 23. But such as live in sins of omission are without faith, and therefore without Christ, and therefore must be without heaven for ever. Faith is a sanctifying as well as a justifying grace—Acts. xxvi. 18, 'And to give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in Christ'—and therefore will not suffer the soul to live in any sin.

Faith will not suffer a man to live in the want of love to God, in so great an omission; for when faith certifieth the soul of God's love to it, this kindleth in the soul flames of love to God, 1 John iv. 19. When faith brings much fuel, the fire of love will be great. Faith will not suffer a man to live without repentance. The eye of faith, which beholds a Christ crucified for sin, affects the heart with sorrow for, and indignation against, those sins that crucified him: Zech. xii. 10, 'They shall see him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' Faith will not suffer a man to live without delight in Christ, and rejoicing in the God of all consolation. Faith seeth so much good certainly laid up in the covenant and promises for the soul, that it fills the soul with joy in the hope and expectation of the enjoyment of them: 'Whom having not seen, we love; and in whom believing, though now we see him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' 1 Peter i. 7, 8. Faith will not suffer a man to live without waiting quietly on God. Faith will not limit the Holy One of Israel, but patiently stay God's time for the mercies the soul wanteth. Faith knoweth his bonds are good, his debts are in sure hands: 'The God that cannot lie hath promised,' Titus i. 2; and therefore is not hasty to call them in: 'He that believeth will not make haste,' Isa. xxviii. 16. Faith will not suffer a man to live without prayer. He that knows his own wants and necessities, how great and urgent they are, and also where he may quickly have liberal supplies, and bountiful relief, will not long be kept from that door. You may sooner and easier put off a beggar ready to starve, who must needs perish if

charity do not help him, and persuade him never to ask alms more, as keep a believer from his daily waiting at heaven's temple to ask spiritual alms. An unbeliever hath little hope to speed, and therefore little heart to speak; but a believer hath tasted God to be gracious, and received many a blessing upon his knees, and therefore cannot but know that door again at which he hath received so good, so large doles. He knoweth that whatsoever he asketh, according to the will of God, in the name of Christ, shall be granted him, 1 John v. 14; John xiv. 14. Hereby he is encouraged to beg and ask: 'I believed, therefore have I spoken,' saith David, Ps. cxvi. 10: I believed, saith the soul, therefore have I wept, and prayed, and made supplication, and have prevailed.

Faith will not suffer a man to live without Scripture. The word of God is the food of faith, and a man can as well live without bread, as faith without the word, 1 Peter ii. 2. It is Scripture that breeds faith: 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,' Rom. x. 17. And it is Scripture that feeds faith, and helps it to thrive: 'I hope in thy word,' Ps. cxix. 114. Hope is a degree of faith: so Ps. cxix., 'Establish thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to trust.' Thus I might shew how inconsistent other sins of omission are with faith; and therefore they who live in such sins must be unbelievers, and so obnoxious to the wrath of God, John iii. 36. But I shall conclude this head with this note, that faith is obediential, and therefore it is impossible for a believer to live in disobedience to God's positive laws. We read in Scripture of the obedience of faith.

Faith in the promises works obedience to the precepts. As it is impossible without faith to please God, Heb. xi., so it is impossible with faith not to desire to please him. The disobedient and unbelievers are joined together.

Abraham was called to a hard piece of service—to leave his country; this was hard, to forsake his native soil, Jer. ii. 10. *Nescio qua natale solum, &c.;* therefore God commands us to pity and relieve strangers, Jer. xxii. 3, because they are comfortless, being out of their own country. To leave his kindred, this was harder; there is a tender affection between near relations. If he had gone into a strange country with his kindred, their company might have sweetened the bitterness of his banishment; but he must leave his country as well as kindred behind him; nay, he must leave these, and go into a place where he must not have a foot of land for himself, Gen. xii. 1–4, yet Abraham obeys. But what was the weight

which set the wheels in such quick ready motion? truly his faith was the spring of his obedience: mark, Heb. xi. 8, 'By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.'

Reas. 4. Christ will at the great day condemn men to hell, who live in sins of omission, because such persons are hypocrites. Hell is prepared for hypocrites and unbelievers, saith Christ, Mat. xxiv. 51. Others, as younger brethren, receive their part of wrath under them as the heirs. They are the great owners of hell, the chief landlords of the valley of death; others do, as it were, hold from and under them. 'So the hypocrite in heart heaps up wrath.' The hypocrite in heart. Hypocrisy lies close in the heart, as the juggler's tools, out of sight. As in the cellar under the parliament there was nothing to be seen but what was lawful and allowable, coals and wood, fit provision for winter; but when these were taken away, and the cellar was searched to the bottom, then the barrels of powder appeared, and the coals and wood were discovered to be fuel laid in for the devil's kitchen. So many persons who are unblamable, as we say, in their lives, walk without offence, are negatively holy, these seem to be good men, and approved; but if we search them further, to the bottom, their hypocrisy appears, that all this was for vainglory, or some carnal interest; they heap up wrath, and shall have that wrath which is so dreadful, that hell is called by that name, in great measure; or he himself by his hypocrisy is daily filling up that cup of wrath which he must drink of eternally. A hypocritical nation are the people of God's wrath, Isa. x. 5, 6, whom he appoints to ruin. They go about to mock God as they do men; but they deceive themselves, God is not mocked. They do as those who use much art to hide the wrinkles and defects of nature, but God can see Jezebel under all her paint, and find out the wife of Jeroboam, notwithstanding her disguise, and will punish the dissembler with the lake of fire; and then what shall become of the professor? All that love and make a lie are doomed to that dungeon of darkness. Hypocrisy is the loudest lie that ever was told, because it is given to God himself. It may be said to every hypocrite, as Peter to Ananias, 'Thou hast lied, not to man, but to God,' Acts v. 4; for he tells God, and would make him believe, he forbears gross sins, and is negatively holy, because it is his will, when he neglects his positive precepts, wherein he hath discovered most of his will. Now such as live in omissions, notwithstanding all their profession, and all their negative piety,

are but jugglers and dissemblers. They who are partial in their holiness are not sound at heart. Whoever obeys any command out of conscience, will endeavour obedience to every command. David is approved for his integrity, from the universality of his obedience, 1 Kings xiv. 8. So Zacharias and Elisabeth are declared righteous before God, *i.e.*, upright, 'walking in all the statutes and commandments of the Lord blameless,' Luke i. 6. Uprightness makes no baulks in the field of divine precepts. Were not this man who lives in omissions unsound, he would fear omissions as much as commissions, for sincerity hates every evil way, Ps. cxix. 104, and he would be careful to obey affirmative as well as negative commands; for uprightness, as Moses, hath the whole law in its hands, nay, written in its heart, and expounded in its life. But this man, who, like a globous body, toucheth the law of God in some one point, but meets not in the rest, sheweth plainly that he is hollow within, as your globes are. For, observe it, if this man were sincere, and acted upon conscientious grounds, then those pious reasons upon which he forbears sins of commission, would incline him to take heed of sins of omission. If he forbears commissions, because they are against the will of God, which should be the main ground of all obedience, Ps. cxix. 5, 6, then he would also take heed of omissions, because they are as much against the will of God as commissions. If the authority of God were that which swayed him in his negative, the same would move him to positive holiness, for there is the same authority in negative and in positive precepts, Exod. xx. The same God that saith, 'Thou shalt not steal,' saith, 'Thou shalt be diligent to know the state of thy flock; and thou shalt give to him that asketh.'

Again, if this man abstains from commissions, because they dishonour God, he would also take heed of omissions, for they dishonour God also. Every breach of the law is a dishonour to the lawgiver, Rom. ii. 23, 24. Further, if he forbear commissions, because he is redeemed from them with the blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 17–19, he would take heed of omissions; for Christ did not only redeem from sin, but also unto service: Tit. ii. 14, 'He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Once more, if he did forbear commissions, because they are injurious to his own soul, and deprive him of heaven and happiness, then he would take heed of omissions, for they are as destructive to his soul, and will as certainly hinder it of heaven, as the text assureth us. So that upon whatsoever conscientious grounds he forbears commissions, he

would upon the same grounds take heed of omissions, which he not doing, proclaims himself a hypocrite, and as such, is most justly condemned to die eternally. He that forbears sin from a principle of grace, will be as careful to do good as to abstain from evil. Restraining grace matters not much the omission of good, but renewing grace or holiness in truth cannot allow it. Such a man chooseth the things that please God, Isa. lvi. 4.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Use 1. *Of the doctrine by way of information, How dreadful will be the condition of those that live in sins of commission.*

Having explained the doctrine, by describing the nature and danger of sins of omission, as also the reasons why Christ will sentence those that are guilty of them to an eternal banishment from his presence, and to eternal torments with the devil and his angels, I now proceed to the application of the point. This doctrine may be useful, 1. By way of information; 2. By way of examination; 3. By way of exhortation.

1. The doctrine is useful by way of information.

Use 1. If Christ will condemn men for sins of omission at the great day, what will become of them that are guilty of gross crimes, and who live in sins of commission? These must be doubly punished, for they are guilty of omissions and commissions too. If they who feed not the hungry, and clothe not the naked, shall be damned, surely they who take meat out of the mouth of the poor, and rob the needy of their raiment by fraud or force, shall be doubly damned. If they be sent to hell who visit not the sick and imprisoned, how doleful will their judgment be who wound the servants of Christ, and cast them into prison! If the mere civil man be excluded the highest heaven, surely the scandalous sinner shall be cast into the lowest hell: Jer. xxii. 13, 'Woe to him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong.'

If the tree that is void of good fruit be hewn down, and cast into the fire, Mat. iii. 10, what will become of the tree that aboundeth in evil fruit? If barrenness of good expose to divine vengeance, what will fruitfulness in evil do? If the fig tree that had leaves and no figs was cursed, and withered away, what curse shall befall those trees that bear gall and wormwood? 'Whose grapes are the

grapes of Sodom, and whose clusters are the clusters of Gomorrah.' If men shall perish who call not on the name of God, what shall become of them who blaspheme the name of God? If they who hear not the word of God shall be destroyed, what destruction shall befall them who deride it, and mock at it? If those whose feet run not the ways of God's commandments, who lift not up their eyes to heaven and pray, whose hands are folded in their bosoms, and whose tongues talk not of judgment, shall be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever; where shall they be cast whose feet are swift to shed blood, whose eyes are full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin; whose hands are full of bribery and extortion, and whose tongues are full of cursing and lying, and whose throat is an open sepulchre.

What tongue can tell the misery that will befall such sinners at the great day? If not relieving the poor, and not supplying the needy, and not visiting the fatherless and widow, the sick and imprisoned, cause such a severe sentence to be denounced against them as, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels for ever,' what sentence shall be denounced against those that grind the faces of the poor, that make music of their moans, Isa. iii. 15, that sell them for a pair of shoes, Amos ii. 6, who oppress the poor and crush the needy, Amos iv. 1, and who slay the widow and fatherless?

'Go to, you rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you,' James v. 1–6. Those sins that are crying, and do more especially require vengeance at the hands of God, and provoked divine justice to take notice of them, are sins of commission. As murder: Gen. iv. 10, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground.' Sodomy, 'The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, because their sin is grievous,' Gen. xviii. 20. Oppression of God's servants, Exod. iii. 7, or of any widows or fatherless: 'If thou afflict the widow and the fatherless, and they cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry, for I am gracious,' Exod. xxii. 23; or of any poor and needy, as in the text of James v. 4, 'The cry of the labourers are entered into the ears of the Lord.'

1. These sinners who are guilty of these gross commissions are guilty of omissions also; they have the weight of both sorts of sins to press them to hell. A man may be guilty of omissions, as not to believe, not to pray, not to examine his own soul, &c., and yet be free from gross commissions; he may be no liar, no thief, no oppressor, no murderer, no adulterer, at least in regard of the outward acts, which I intend here; but a man cannot live in gross commissions, but he must also live in omissions. The oppressor must omit to relieve the poor; he that destroys life must neglect to save it. Besides, they who live in such commissions must omit faith and repentance, which are inconsistent with them; they must neglect daily to call on God, for prayer would make them leave such sinning; but indeed such sinning makes them leave off, though possibly they did sometimes begin to seek God in a formal way, praying. Those in the 5th of James, who oppressed the labourers, who condemned and killed the just, gross commissions, had their riches corrupted, and garments moth-eaten, *i.e.*, were guilty of omissions, would rather their wealth should waste with rust, and their raiments with moths, than bestow any on the poor. Those in Hosea iv. 1, 2, who were guilty of swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and adultery, omitted truth, and mercy, and the knowledge of God.

2. Sins of commission, I mean those gross crimes, do more openly dare God than omissions do. By omissions we deny him, but by such commissions we dare him, and defy him. Such sinners, as it were, bid God do his worst, they fear him not. They do, at least implicitly, mock at his threatenings, and deride his reproofs, and slight his judgments that are executed on their fellows before their own faces. They speak in the language of the Jews, Isa. v. 19, 'That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it.' These jeer at God's judgments, and mock at his menaces; they credit not his comminations, nor expect their execution. They look on the words of their prophets as mere wind, and the matter of their prophecy as a mere mockery. 'Let him make speed,' &c., 'and the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh;' *i.e.*, you have much and long told us, that your Holy One, forsooth, who cannot abide sin, 'and who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' will execute his judgments on us for our sins, and that this is by counsel established, and cannot be reversed. We would willingly see these judgments so much talked of, and do wish that they may hasten, and not linger as they

do; for we neither believe you nor fear them. But who were these that spake at this desperate rate? Truly those that lived in commissions, 'who brought forth wild grapes,' Isa. v. 4; who brought forth filthy, naughty, abominable fruit; instead of grapes, the vineyard brought forth thorns and briers. These were they who dared the divine justice, as if they had been incarnate devils.

3. Gross sins of commission are more directly contrary to the very light of nature. Indeed it is against the light of nature not to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and help the distressed; but it is much more against the light of nature to oppress the poor and needy, and slay the widow and fatherless. Because natural light is much more disturbed by gross commissions than by bare neglects, it appears that those are more against a natural conscience than these. We read that the natural light of the heathen did discover the sinfulness of their commissions, and condemn them for them, Rom. i. 2, 32; and that the barbarians, by the light of nature, could discover the evil of murder, and how vengeance, like a blood-hound, did pursue the violent man, to take and slay him, Acts xxviii. 4. Now that which so directly opposeth, not only Scripture, but nature, and that which a man will do, as it were, violence to his own conscience that he may commit, must unquestionably be dreadful, and out of measure sinful. As the apostle saith, 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin,' James iv. 17; so say I to him that knoweth he should not do these evils, and doth them, to him they are sins, *i.e.*, a wickedness with a witness. They have more of enmity against God, and contempt of his mind, and have sadder marks of divine vengeance. But what sins are more against knowledge, than those that are not only committed in spite of Scripture, but also of nature itself. No vinegar so sharp as that which is made of the sharpest wine. 'He that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' He that knoweth his master's will is that he should forbear such sins, and yet commits them, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke xii.

4. Gross sins of commission are more scandalous to men, and bring more dishonour to God. They give greater offence to men; good men are grieved by them. Lot's righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites, 2 Pet. ii. 7. David tells us rivers of tears ran down his eyes, because the wicked broke God's law, Ps. cxix. 136. Jeremiah wept in secret for the sins of Israel, Jer. xiii. 17. Wicked men's sins cause godly men's sorrow. They need not disturb the righteous by their persecutions

of them; they do it sufficiently by their transgressions against God. As these gross sins grieve the good, so they harden the bad; others are encouraged to dress themselves by such foul and false glasses, Jer. xxiii. 14. Vile sinners presume their states good though their lives be bad, because they are no worse than such and such, (possibly who are learned, and rich, and therefore counted wise men,) and therefore, whatever befalls them, they shall fare as well as others. Alas! how many walk more by patterns than by commands, and so are led by following others to hell! And how deep will they be damned who draw others after them to sin and hell! 'They who forsake the law, praise the wicked,' Prov. xxviii. 4, *i.e.*, commend them for their wickedness, as they who keep the law condemn them. Gross commissions dishonour God most; they cause others to speak ill of God, and disgracefully of religion. Nathan tells David, that by his uncleanness and murder he had caused the enemies of God to blaspheme, 2 Sam. xii. If a child of God commit one such noisome act, the wicked quickly take the scent, and a cry is raised among the whole pack, who with open mouth upon this pursue and blaspheme God and godliness. By these particulars it appears that gross commissions are sins of the greatest size, and therefore must have the greatest severity. If they are used as bastards who met not Israel with bread and water, how will God use them at last who meet his people with bonds and fetters, with fire and fagot? If Christ pronounce such a dreadful sentence in the text against the (comparative) green tree, what shall become of the dry?

CHAPTER XXVII.

Negative godliness is not enough.—Christ's impartiality in judgment.

Use 2. In the second place, if Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, it may inform us that a negative religion, or negative Christianity, is not enough. Many please themselves that they are gracious, because they are not openly vicious; and that they are pious, because they are not scandalously profane; but they mistake and deceive themselves. It is good not to do evil, but it is evil not to do good. Negative Christians are, as it was said of Galba, *potius extra vitia quam cum virtute*, rather seemingly free from vice, than really filled with virtue. Or at best, as was re-

ported of Cato, that he was *homo virtuti simillimus*, a man that looked like a virtuous person.

How many civil men presume their persons holy, because they are not so filthy as those who rake in ditches and kennels, and defile themselves daily with scandalous abominations; and they presume their states to be good, and themselves in the way to heaven, because they are no drunkards, no swearers, no adulterers, no thieves, no murderers; when for all this they shall be cast to hell, because they are no believers, no penitents, no obedient subjects to the King of saints, 'Because they know not God, and obey not the gospel,' 2 Thes. i. 7, 8. Such men are farther distant from good than from evil. Ceasing from evil is not enough, it is but one step heavenward; doing of good must accompany it, or it will be of small moment.

I confess, when I behold a civil man, who is harmless in his carriage, unblameable, in regard of scandal, in his public conversation, and courteous in his behaviour to all, I cannot but respect him, and am ready to wish (as Athanasius, that all the world of atheists and profane wretches would turn hypocrites) that all scandalous sinners would turn civilians, and come so far towards holiness; but yet I must say that this is scarce half way to Christianity. He is not half a saint, who is but a negative saint. The forbearance of gross corruptions is the easiest and least part of religion, and therefore will not speak any man in a state of salvation. The tree that is barren, and without good fruit, is for the fire, as well as the tree that brings forth evil fruit.

For men to think to excuse themselves that they do no hurt, wrong neither man, woman, or child, and are not, as the pharisee said, as the publicans, who generally were oppressors, is but a vain, foolish thing. The idle servant might have said, Lord, I did no harm with my talent; I did not lay it out in rioting and drunkenness, or any way to thy dishonour; I only hid it, and did not improve it, Mat. xxv., yet this was enough to condemn him. Can we call ground good ground for bearing no weeds, if it never bring forth good corn? Or do we count that servant a good servant, who doth not wrong his master in his estate, by purloining or wasting it, if he live idle all day, and neglect the business his master appoints him? Believe it, reader, thou mayest not be morally evil to the abomination of men, and yet not spiritually good to the acceptation of God. He keeps no law of God, who minds only the negative part of it. A life free from enormity is too often accompanied with a heart full of iniquity. And that this negative holiness is insufficient, will appear if we consider,—

1. That the Holy Ghost characteriseth a godly man, both negatively and positively. The Scripture tells us that a true Christian minds both parts of the law, its commanding part as well as its forbidding part. When the Holy Ghost speaks of David's goodness, he tells us that he served the wills of God in his generation, not only his forbidding will, but also his commanding will, Acts xiii. 36. When Job is commended as a godly man, he is said to eschew evil, there was his negative holiness; and to fear God, there was his positive holiness, Job i. 1, 8. The psalmist describes the happy man by his holiness both ways.

(1.) By way of negation: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, (*i.e.*, that committeth not wickedness, which is the consultation of the ungodly,) nor standeth in the way of sinners, (*i.e.*, that goeth not on with pleasure in any course of profaneness,) nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful,' (*i.e.*, that hardeneth not his heart against advice and admonition, &c.)

(2.) By way of position: 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in that law doth he meditate day and night.' His affection to the law, and his meditation in it, are both positive; and without these the man could neither be holy nor happy. He might have been able to say, I have not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful, and yet been a wicked and cursed man; for negatives neither speak nor make any man holy. It is a positive quality that gives being, perfection, and denomination to piety; therefore Jehu is branded for a wicked man, notwithstanding all his zeal against Baal, because he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel, 1 Kings x. 29-31. Philosophers tell us that motions are imperfect, and but *in fieri*, whilst they are passing from the *terminus a quo*, and are not perfect, or *in facto esse*, till the *terminus ad quem* be attained. Whilst a man is departing from evil, he is but an imperfect Christian; when he comes to the doing of good, which is the end of the former, then he is a Christian indeed.

2. The law, which is the rule of religion, is affirmative as well as negative. Every man is so far perfect in his calling, or in any art, as he agrees with his rule; and every man is so far religious, and no farther, as he agreeth with the will of God revealed in his word, which is the rule of religion: Gal. vi. 16, 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace be to them,' &c. Now this rule hath positive as well as negative commands; nay, all its negative commands have, as hath been shewn before, somewhat positive in them, and therefore negative holiness cannot be sufficient. He that makes

not conscience of every part of God's will, makes conscience of no part of God's will. He that denieth ungodliness and worldly lusts, because the law, his rule, forbids them, will also live righteously, soberly, and godly, because the same rule commands them, Titus ii. 11, 12. Indeed, all true eschewing of evil doth proceed out of love to good, so that he who doth not delight in good, and do it, cannot eschew evil out of any good principle. Observe the rule, Eph. iv. 23, 24, 'And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;' Isa. i. 15. But men love to be complete in everything, but that which deserves exactness.

3. A heathen may be negatively religious. A Cato, a Seneca, an Aristides, may be free from intemperance, bribery, injustice, uncleanness, and all gross sins; and can we think that religion sufficient for us which heathens may attain to? Is there nothing revealed by the sunlight of Scripture for us to do, which they were unable to see by the dim rush candle of nature? The Holy Ghost acquaints us with the condition of the heathen: Eph. ii. 12, 'That they were without God, without Christ, strangers to the covenant of promise, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and without hope in the world.' In which words we have their dreadful estate, how far they are from any Saviour, and so from any hope of salvation; which would not be, if their negative holiness were sufficient to make them happy.

Use 3. If Christ will condemn men for sins of omission at the great day, then it may inform us of the justice and righteousness of Christ, that 'he loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity,' Ps. xlv.; and again, 'that he shall judge the world in righteousness,' Acts xvii. 31. Herein it appears,—

1. Because he spares no sins. He condemneth those that live in omissions, little light sins in the imaginations of men, as well as those that live in commissions. He sends to hell those that do not relieve, as well as those that rob his people. He poureth out his wrath upon them that do not visit his members in prison, as well as those that cast them into prison. Those sins that are peccadilloes in the world's eye, have felt the heavy weight of his hand. The man that gathered a few sticks was destroyed with stones. Uzzah touched the ark out of kindness, but God smote him with death for it. Moses, for omitting the circumcision of his child, was like to have lost his life. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, neglected, as is supposed by expositors, to fetch fire from the altar to burn their sacrifices, and were destroyed with fire from heaven,

Lev. x. The impartiality of Christ is evident herein, that at the great day he will bid the civil as well as the scandalous sinner depart from him into everlasting fire.

2. Because he spareth no sinners. He saith to all those on his left hand, whether rich or poor, great or small, high or low, if guilty of these omissions, 'Depart from me into everlasting fire.' He is no respecter of persons; he spareth none for their greatness and strength. His hand reacheth the tallest cedars, and plucks up the strongest oaks. Neither power nor majesty can free or exempt persons from his severity. If princes and potentates will omit their duty, they must expect to feel his fury, Rev. vi. 15. Pharaoh, Jeroboam, Ahab, Ahaz, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, might neglect their duties to men, and escape punishment from men, but could not neglect their duties to God at so easy a rate. As all their sins were within the view of his omniscience, so all their persons were within the reach of his vengeance, and that found them out to their cost.

He spareth none for their nearness to him. He beholdeth them afar off that are very near to him, when they make bold with him. Judges on earth may sometimes, though sinfully always, favour their kindred in an unrighteous cause, but he judgeth otherwise: 'Though Coniah be to be as the signet on my right hand, I will pluck him thence,' Jer. xxii. 24. Israel was the nearest people to God of any people in the world, Ps. cxlviii. 14, with Deut. iv. 7; and Moses was the nearest to God of any of the people of Israel, yet they were excluded his rest for not believing his word; and he was denied entrance into Canaan for not sanctifying God's name.

3. He judgeth all according to law. This is another requisite to suffice;[1] he will not condemn any for their omissions or commissions, but according to law. We count that judge just indeed that keeps the law, and will not upon any account swerve from that. Our Lord Jesus, when he sentenceth those that neglect to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, &c., to everlasting fire, proceedeth according to law exactly. These persons, as hath been before proved, are under the law of works, and so must stand or fall for ever, as they obey or disobey that law. Now that law condemneth for omissions, and not doing our duties, as well as for commissions, and abounding in enormities. It saith, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them,' Gal. iii. 13. Observe, the law curseth those that omit, that continue not to do their duties, as well as those that do the contrary.

[1] Qu. 'office'?—ED.

4. He will render to every man according to his works. He may punish, and doth in this world, less, but neither in the other nor in this more, than our iniquities deserve. All men's sins are not equal, therefore all men's sufferings shall not be equal. According to the degree of men's defilements, such shall be the degree of their punishment. He distinguisheth between sins and sins, between them that afflict his children, and those that relieve them not in their afflictions; between those that hale them to prisons, and put them to death, and those that visit them not in prison. He exacteth not of men more than is meet.

He will put a difference between heathens, who have little means to know and worship him aright, and Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, to whom pertained the adoption, and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the promises. These have greater means and mercies, and therefore greater wrath and severity: 'Tribulation and anguish, indignation and wrath on the soul of every man that doth evil; on the Jew first, and also on the Gentiles,' Rom. iii. 2, ix. 4, and ii. 7. 'You only have I known, therefore you will I punish of all the families of the earth for your iniquities,' Amos iii. 2. He will distinguish between Jews and Christians that live under the gospel. Omissions are more tolerable, and less punishable, among heathens than Jews, and among Jews before Christ's coming, than those Jews that lived under the gospel, and saw Christ's miracles, and heard his sermons, with those Christians that enjoy the gospel, Mat. xi. 21–23. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for Chorazin and Bethsaida, and for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Capernaum, because these lived under greater light and helps, and yet continued in the neglect of faith and repentance.

He will not punish those that omit their duties ignorantly, when they are diligent to improve what advantages they have for knowledge, so severely as he will those who neglect their duties knowingly. God expects a life answerable to that light which he hath given us, and if we imprison his truth in unrighteousness, we provoke him in the highest degree: 'He that knoweth his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. He that knoweth not his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with few stripes.' Both shall be beaten, but the former suffer more stripes than the latter. It is cold comfort, yet herein the righteousness of the judge appeareth, that some who are guilty of omissions shall have a cooler hell than others: 'For he rendereth to every man according to his works,' Rom. ii.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Practical godliness necessary.

Use 4. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, for not visiting the sick and imprisoned, and not relieving the hungry and naked, then it may inform us that nothing short of practical godliness will speak a man's estate safe at this day, or forespeak his estate to be comfortable at that day. The want of this is the cause of these men's condemnation. They might forbear injuring the saints; they might speak them fair, bid them, Be ye fed, be ye clothed; they might wish them well, they might honour and respect them, as Herod did the Baptist, for their sanctity and righteousness, yet because they were void of this practical godliness, they gave them not wherewith to be fed and clothed, they are banished the presence of Christ, and adjudged to the curses and company of devils.

1. A great profession will not do without this practical godliness. Some soar high in their professions of, and pretences to, greater strictness and degrees of grace and holiness than others, who, alas! fall foully often on earth, and always into hell, for lack of this practical godliness; as some great tradesmen, who living wholly upon their credit with others, without any stock of their own, quickly break and miscarry. A profession is but as the leaves of a tree, a sign of fruit, not the fruit itself. There is a vast difference between leaves and fruit. Some think that Christ had not cursed the fig tree if it had been without leaves as well as without fruit; but when by its leaves it professed to have fruit, and invited him to it in expectation thereof, and disappointed him, he presently claps a curse on it, that withers it at the very roots.[1] The pharisees were great professors, made broad their phylacteries, wherever they went, would be known for persons extraordinarily pious and religious, yet how wicked was their state: Mat. v. 20, 'Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall never enter into the kingdom of God;' and how woeful is their condition! 'Woe to you scribes, pharisees, hypocrites!' ye live in omissions, ye neglect the great things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, Mat. xxiii. 23.

2. Great gifts and parts will not do without this. A man may have choice natural abilities, rare acquired accomplishments, yea,

[1] *Vide* Robinson, part i. 132.

common gifts of the Spirit of God, and yet for want of this practical godliness be damned. What amiable words come out of Balaam's mouth! he speaks like a saint, yea, like an angel. How often have I heard his prophecies with great admiration and affection! His tongue hath melted my heart, and yet he had no good works, for all his many good words; and his lack of practical godliness ruined him. What special endowments had they who preached in the name of Christ, and in his name cast out devils, and in his name did many marvellous works, and yet were cast to devils for being workers of iniquity, as all are who are void of this practical godliness, Mat. vii. 21, 23. What excellent gifts doth the apostle suppose a man to have, the gift of prophesying, of understanding all mysteries, and all knowledge, and of all faith, so as to remove mountains, and yet if he have not charity, he is nothing, &c., 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. If he love not his brother, and express it not to his power, by spiritual and bodily charity, which is part of practical godliness, he is nothing in God's eye, whatever he may be in the eyes of men.

3. Great privileges, with seeming performances, without this practical godliness, will not do. They who had tabernacle, temple, ark, covenant, promises, for want of this were destroyed; the ark could not preserve them. Afterwards, when they neglected practical godliness, the temple could not protect them. He bids the Jews go and see what he did to his place at Shiloh for their iniquities. He made them monuments of his fury, who had been patterns of his pity, when they neglected this practical godliness.

How meanly doth God discourse of seeming obedience to his own institutions when this is neglected. Though they had his own divine stamp on them, and were signs of the sweetest sacrifice, and the most acceptable service imaginable, and he had often taken delight in them, yet when they left off to do well, observe his language about them: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me, saith the Lord. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; I cannot bear them.' What strange expressions are here of his own institutions! But what is the reason? Truly the lack of this: ver. 17, 'Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow,' Isa. i. 11–28. And how peremptorily doth he beat men off from trusting in their privileges, as of no advantage without this practical godliness: 'Think not,' saith the Baptist, 'to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.' This was a great privilege, for with him and his seed was the covenant made,

and to them were circumcision, and the passover, the seals of it, given. But what counsel doth he give them? Truly, to mind practical godliness. Bring forth fruit meet for repentance; *i.e.*, for all the great privilege in which you take so much pride, and upon which you lay so much stress, yet you can never flee from the wrath to come, unless you bring forth good fruit, fruit meet for repentance—such fruit as will speak your hearts to be changed, such fruit as is suitable to a renewed nature. This, and this alone, is practical godliness. The coherence in that Mat. iii. 8-10, deserves our observation. And John saith unto the Pharisees, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.' Do not think that God is bound to, and must save you, because ye are Abraham's seed, for God can of stones make sons of Abraham. 'And now also the axe is laid to the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

The condition of men only civil is unsafe and sad.

Use 5. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, for not relieving the poor and afflicted, it may inform us that the condition of men merely civil, and negatively religious, will be woeful at that day. Why? Because Christ will command them to depart from him into everlasting fire. Ah how dreadful will it be to take an eternal farewell of the Lord of life, the God of all grace, the well of salvation, and to enter into a state of death and wrath, and that for ever. 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear,' 1 Pet. iii. By sinner, I suppose, is meant the scandalous man, who liveth in commission. It is said of Mary Magdalene, who had been guilty of notorious enormities, Luke vii., 'For she is a sinner;' and it is said of the publican (whose whole tribe was infamous for extortation and bribery) that he was a sinner: 'He is gone to be a guest to one that is a sinner.' By ungodly, as the very word ὁ ἀσεβὴς signifieth, is meant one that liveth in omissions, one that liveth without the worship of God; *i.e.*, without the love and fear, the acknowledgment and adoration

of this God. Worship is that high honour and solemn respect that the creature owes to God; not to give him this is ungodliness. An ungodly man is one that doth not seek God, nor trust God, nor obey God; that doth not own him in his mercies as his father and benefactor, nor in his judgments as a wise master, that would by chastisements make him partaker of his holiness. Now if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear? If there be a difficulty in the salvation of the righteous, there is a necessity of the damnation of the sinner and ungodly. If the righteous get so hardly to heaven, the sinner and ungodly must surely be cast into hell. Where shall the sinner and ungodly, those that are guilty of these omissions and commissions, appear? They must appear somewhere, but they can appear nowhere with comfort, or without unspeakable horror. Where shall they appear? before God? why, they hate his being, despise his dominions, slight his love, disobey his laws, and indeed seek his life; and can they appear before him? Can they look for a smile from his face, who loathe him perfectly? or can they stand before his frowns and fury? Do they know the weight of his hand, the killing darts of his eye, and the power of his anger? No, surely, they cannot appear before him: 'Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may stand when thou art angry?' Where shall they appear? Shall they appear before Christ the judge of quick and dead? before him who sometimes invited them earnestly to come to him, and entreated them affectionately to accept of him, and live with him? Shall they appear before him? It is his call which they have despised, and his commands which they have violated. It is his blood which they have trampled on, and his Spirit whom they have grieved. They are his members whom the sinners have oppressed and wronged, and his children, and spouse, and body, which the ungodly have neglected, and not relieved. Oh how glad would they be if the rocks would crush them to pieces, that they might be delivered from the wrath of the Lamb! Rev. vi. 15. Their severe sentence, which may make every ear to tingle, and heart to tremble that hears it, will proceed from his mouth: 'Then shall he say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' But where shall these sinners and ungodly appear? Shall they appear before the saints? Alas! with what face can they behold them, whose persons they have imprisoned, whose estates they have plundered, whose profession they have derided, whose names they have abused, and whom they have often wished out of the way, and thought the troublers of the

family, and town, and country where they lived? If the saints plead it must be against them, for they cannot but as justices agree and concur with the sentence of the judge as righteous and just.

But where shall they appear? Shall they appear before the law? No, that condemneth them for the least omission, for the smallest commission, to hell fire; they are the prohibitions of the law that the sinner hath transgressed, and they are the precepts of the law that the ungodly hath not obeyed; and therefore the law curseth them both to the uttermost. The law enableth sin to bind over the transgressor of it to the wrath and curse of God; hence it is said, 'The strength of sin is the law.'

But where shall they appear? Shall they appear before the gospel? No, their omissions have most relation to the gospel. They have not believed the truth of it. They have not embraced the goodness of it. They have not obeyed the precepts of it. They rejected the tenders of pardon and life made to them in the gospel with frequency and fervency. They would not come to their physician to be healed of their mortal diseases. Though he came to them, and offered his help freely, and assured them of effectual and speedy recovery, if they would be directed by him, yet they rejected the counsel of God against themselves; therefore the gospel will condemn as surely, and more sorely, than the law: 'If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every disobedience received a just recompence of reward: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb. ii. 2, 3; John iii. 19. And again, 'of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy?'

But where shall they appear? Shall they appear on earth? Surely there will be no earth then for them to appear in. That earth which they sported so much in, as leviathan in the waters, and which they were fond of, and delighted in, will be burnt up with fire, and consumed with fervent heat.

But where shall they appear? Shall they appear in heaven? Can an unsanctified heart enter into the Holy of holies? No: 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. An impure eye cannot behold such an infinitely pure object. When angels, seated in heaven as their habitation, once lost their purity, they soon lost their place. Heaven could not bear them; it is not as Noah's ark, to take in all sorts, clean or unclean: 'Into it can in no wise enter anything that is unclean,' Rev. xxi. 27. Neither could they bear heaven. The spiritual delights of that celestial court became unsuitable to their polluted natures. The rarest

dainties and most curious delicates are altogether unsavoury and unpleasant to an aguish and distempered palate.

But where shall they appear? If they cannot appear before God their maker, before the Lord Jesus Christ, before the saints, before whom shall they appear? If they cannot appear before the law, before the gospel, before what shall they appear? It must be in hell, before devils and damned spirits, with them to lodge and dwell for ever. Ah, the great day is called the terrible day of the Lord Jesus, and it will be a terrible day indeed to these mere civilians.

It is called the day of perdition of ungodly men. It is to others a day of consolation: 'Lift up your heads with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh;' a day of promotion: 'It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom,' Luke xii. 32; John xvii. 24. A day of rest from all their labours, and sorrows, and sufferings, bodily or spiritually, Rev. xiv. 13. But it is the day of perdition of ungodly men. They who live without God here, must live without him for ever; and this farthest, utmost, endless departure of the creature from God, who is the only life and heaven of him, will be a death and hell with a witness. God will be God at that day in the account of the worst of men, though he be their laughing-stock and sinning-stock at this day.

Though these ungodly ones sit aloft here in the courts of men, and who but they, yet 'the ungodly shall not stand in his judgment,' Ps. i. 5. At the great day, when they shall be judged, 1. They shall be ashamed, they shall not stand, *i.e.*, not hold up their heads with joy, but hang down their heads with shame, Dan. xii. Some shall arise to shame and confusion of face. 2. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, *i.e.*, they shall not be justified. When they shall be tried for their lives and deaths, for their endless, unchangeable states, they shall be cast and condemned. When all Adam's posterity shall make their personal appearance before the God of the spirits of all flesh, to receive their eternal doom; and when the judge of quick and dead, clothed with his majestic robes of glory, accompanied with an illustrious train of angels, shall sit down on the judgment seat, he shall pronounce a sentence of condemnation on all ungodly ones. 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand?' Ps. cxxx. 3; *i.e.*, if thou, Lord, should observe exactly the best man's heart and life, and accordingly deal with him, not one man could be justified. Who shall stand, *i.e.*, righteous, at thy bar? 3. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment; *i.e.*, they shall not conquer, when they shall be impleaded and accused by the devil and the law at that day. An

army foiled, is said not to stand before their enemies. And again, an army beaten is said to fall before their adversaries, Dan. xi. 25. And the conquerors are said to stand, Eph. vi. 13. The devil will bring his large bills of indictments into the court against the ungodly, for he is *ἀντίδικος*, 1 Pet. v. 8, a court-adversary; and the law will second the devil, and join with him in his accusations; the sinner's conscience will join with both, and assent to the truth of their indictments. The ungodly will have no advocate to plead for him. Christ, that sometimes offered him that kindness, will now plead against him, and so he must needs fall and be conquered by his enemies

CHAPTER XXX.

Sinners' conviction at the day of judgment. The purity of Christ's religion above all others.

Use 6. If Christ will say to them on the left hand, 'Depart from me: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat;' or if Christ will condemn men for sins of omission at the great day, it informs us that Christ will be rational in his most severe proceedings, even to the conviction of the sinner's own conscience. I draw this from the coherence of the verses. Christ first pronounceth the sentence: ver. 41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' and then, ver. 42, he gives the reason, 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c., which, though at first they seem to question, yet at last they are muzzled and put to silence. Jude tells us of solemn condemnation and solemn conviction of these ungodly ones, as the chief business of that day: 'Behold, he cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment on all, and to convince all that are ungodly amongst them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodlily committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him,' Jude 14, 15. Execution, by an *hysteron proteron*, is put before conviction; yet one great work of that great day is to convince these ungodly ones, and the severity of the process is against the ungodly.

This conviction implieth,

1. A reflection of conscience upon all their past and former sins. Conscience, as a glass, shall represent to the sinner all his lusts, which he hath loved above his soul and Saviour, in all their ugly features and loathsome colours. The books at that day will be

opened, Rev. xx. 12., *i.e.*, the book of God's remembrance, Mal. iii., and the book of conscience. Sins are not gone as soon as done; God records them in his book of remembrance, and conscience will review them all in that day of vengeance. Though it could not be heard by the sinner in this world, for the noise of his carnal delights, and cry of his worldly delights, yet when it sets his sins in order before his eyes in their monstrous frightful shapes, it will thunder in his ears, as Reuben to his brethren, Did not I tell you of this, and say, Do not sin, and thou wouldst not hear; therefore all this wrath, and fury, and flames, and darkness, and chains are come upon thee.

2. This conviction implieth a silencing the sinner, that he will have nothing to say either against God, or for himself. A man that is convinced hath his mouth stopped. When the spirit convinceth the world of sin, the world hath not a word to say against the sin and guilt which the law chargeth on it; every mouth is stopped, and all the world is guilty before God. How often is the poor creature self-convinced and self-condemned here; but soon after the sick qualms go off his stomach, and he is revived with the cordials of sinful shifts and excuses, wherewith he deludes himself, and presumes he may also deceive God; but at the great day, as his convictions will be more killing, so they will be more lasting. The man will be dumb and speechless when Christ shall say, Why didst thou deny to relieve my servants in their wants? Why didst thou slight my blood, neglect my worship, grieve my Spirit, and omit to obey my positive laws? Mat. xxii. 3–5. The very heathen, who shall be imprisoned in the dark dungeon of hell, for imprisoning the truth, and holding it in unrighteousness, will not have a motion in their breasts of accusing God for false imprisonment. How certainly then, and how fully, will the consciences of Christians, who lived under the gospel, justify God, when he shall condemn them for not believing, and not repenting, upon the messages he sent to them of pardon and life.

Use 7. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, it may inform us of the excellency of the Christian religion above all other religions. The excellency of any religion consisteth in the purity of its precepts, and strictness of its commands; now no religion is so holy in its commands, and so exact in its laws, as the Christian religion. Moral duties are advanced by it to their highest perfection, and moral vices are debased by it to their lowest degradation. 'The commandment of the Lord is pure,' Ps. xix. 'Thy word is very pure.' Christ will condemn men to hell at the last

day for omissions as well as commissions, for neglect of known duties, as well as for the perpetration of gross enormities.

1. If we consider the religion of the heathen, we shall find that it is vastly inferior in purity to the Christian religion. Among the Gentiles, who lived without the gospel, it can scarce be said there was any religion at all, for their gods were stocks, and stones, and trees, and fire, and water, and beasts, and dead men; nay, their precepts were so far from purity, that they commended and commanded impurity. As among the ancient Babylonians, in the worship of Venus, the women prostituted themselves to all strangers; nay, the very gods of the heathen did, according to their own fictitious writers, patronise all their impieties, even by their own patterns. Jupiter, the chief forsooth of their gods, who had his name from being a helping father, commits incest with his own sister Juno, and his daughter Minerva, sodomy with Ganymedes, ravisheth Europa, banisheth his father Saturn out of his kingdom. Venus was a whore, Mercury a thief, Bacchus a drunkard, &c. But to leave these, and speak to them that were more sober in their understandings, and not so vain in their imaginations, who had ἔργον νόμου, the work of the law written in their hearts, Rom. ii. 14, and improved it to more purpose than others; yet these pleased themselves with a little outward civility, without any inward or outward practical godliness. Their chief devotion consisted in abstaining from gross sins, which might expose them to the shame of men, and the doing some external acts of piety, as sacrificing and mumbling over a few prayers that were little significant. Oh how vastly doth the Christian religion excel this! This religion of the heathen doth rather hide sin than heal it. It doth not root the love of sin out of the heart, only restrain it in the life. But the Christian religion doth forbid sin in the affections as well as in the conversation, it doth *abscindere* as well as *abscondere*, cure sin as well as cover it. In the best heathen the fire of their lusts was only raked up, and covered with ashes from the eyes of the world; but now in the Christian it is quenched, at least in part, and shall by degrees be wholly quenched. The Christian religion doth not only forbid all sins, or outward commissions, but also all lusts and inward inclinations: 'I beseech you, brethren, to abstain as pilgrims and strangers from all fleshly lusts, that war against the soul,' 1 Pet. ii. 11. And a religious Christian doth not only forbear gross commissions, but also abhor secret sinful motions: 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love,' Ps. cxix.

Those among the heathen who were the wisest, made nothing of

neglecting to give God their love, and fear, and trust, their highest honour, and superlative esteem, and exactest obedience, which are the chief of religion. They allowed revenge in case of suffering injury; and some of their greatest lawgivers ordained theft to be unpunishable, if it could be done cleanly and cleverly, so as not to be found out. They put away their wives upon any small distaste, and took others during their pleasure only. Their whole religion had not one prohibition against inward corruptions, nor one precept for inward heart duties, and therefore must of necessity come short of the Christian religion for purity.

2. If we consider the Turkish religion, what a bundle of fooleries is Mahomet's Alcoran, and what a dunghill of filthiness is the religion of his followers! They allow a man as many wives as he can maintain, and encourage men to murder, with a promise of a (poetical, carnal) paradise to all that shall die in the wars against the Christians. They obey the lusts of their tyrant in all things, even to the murder of their sovereign's nearest relations, or chiefest ministers of state, against the very light and law of nature. They do not so much as profess to mind those heart prohibitions and precepts, without which all external holiness is but as a rotten carcase, noisome and unsavoury to God's nostrils, and without any loveliness or life in his eyes. Nay, the popish religion, so far as it differs from the true Christian religion, is impure. They have sins that are venial, allow publicly of uncleanness. The pope hath a revenue out of the stews; they dispense with sodomy, incest, any sin, for money; they place all their holiness in some external mortifications, which God never required at their hands. But what doth the Christian religion do? It reacheth the heart, and teacheth the soul: 'The law of the Lord is perfect,' Ps. xix.

(1.) It directs the whole man, and gives laws to all the powers of the soul, and parts of the body. It directs us about our bodies and outward conversation: it commands to present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, Rom. xii. 1, and the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. It binds the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, all the members to their good behaviour. It allows not any part to be abused to profaneness, Job xxxi. 1; Ps. cxix., xxxvii. 30, 31, and xxxiv. 13, 14; Rom. vi. 13–17. It directs us about our souls: 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,' Ps. xix. 7. It changeth the nature of the soul, and opens the eye of it, and turns it from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, Acts xxvi. 18. It directeth the mind to learn the knowledge of God, as the richest treasure, and

choicest portion, and only happiness of the creature: 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, 'And thou Solomon, my son, know the God of thy fathers.' It directs the will to choose this God for its suitable, and satisfying, and everlasting felicity, Ps. lxxiii. 25. It limits the affections as to their objects, and their motion towards those objects. It forbids inordinate desires after, or delight in, sublunary vanities, and commands moderation in our love to all created comforts: 'Let your moderation be known to all men. The time is short; let them that have wives be as though they had none,' &c., 1 Cor. vii. 29. It enjoins our love in the greatest degree to be placed on the worthiest object: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength,' Mat. xxii. 37. And so our fear: 'Fear him that can cast body and soul into hell; I say unto you, fear him.' It keeps all the unruly passions within their proper banks and bounds, and preserves the superior and inferior faculties in their proper places. Now, what religion, either of moralists or Mohammedans, doth so?

(2.) As it directs about the whole man, so it directs as to every part and passage of this man's conversation. We need never be at a loss for a rule, or at a stand what to do, if we will but use diligence to know and understand the revealed will of God. The Christian religion directs us in our callings, whether magistrates, ministers, tradesmen, soldiers, Luke iii. It directs us in our relations, as husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, Eph. v., and vi.; Col. iii., and iv. It directs us in all conditions how to demean ourselves, in prosperity to be joyful, in adversity to consider how God hath set the one against the other; in afflictions to be patient and prayerful, and more studious of a right improvement of them, than of deliverance out of them. Under mercies it directs us to be thankful to God, the more cheerful in his service, and faithful in the use of our talents, for the honour of our Master. It directs us in all our thoughts, Jer. iv. 14; words, Ps. xxxix. 2; works, Prov. iv. 23, 24, 26. It directs us in all our natural actions, as eating, drinking, sleeping, 1 Cor. x. 31; Titus ii. 12; in our civil converses, Micah vi. 8; in our religious duties, how to pray, James i. 5, 6; how to hear, how to receive, 1 Cor. xi.

(3.) Its purity above and beyond all other religions appears in this, that it forbids evil, all evil, nothing but evil; it commands good, whatsoever is good, and nothing but good, Isa. i.; Ps. xxxii. 14. The laws of Lycurgus among the Grecians, and Numa among the Romans, had somewhat of good in them, but not all; prohibited somewhat that was evil, but not all that was evil. But the

Christian religion is of a larger extent, both in its precepts and prohibitions: 'I have seen an end of all perfections, but thy commandments are exceeding broad,' Ps. cxix. 96. A man with the eye of his body may behold an end of many worldly perfections, of many fair estates, great beauties, large parts, hopeful families; but a man with the eye of his soul (or by faith) may see an end of all earthly perfections. He may see the world in a flame, and all its pomp, and pride, and glory, and gallantry, and crowns, and sceptres, and riches, and treasures, turned into ashes. He may see the heavens passing away like a scroll, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth, with the things thereon, consumed; and all its perfections, which men doated so much on, vanished into smoke and nothing. It is easy to see to the end of all terrene perfections; but it is difficult, yea impossible, to see to the end of divine precepts: 'But thy commandments are exceeding broad,' of a vast latitude, beyond our apprehension. They are so deep, that none can fathom them, Ps. xxxvi. 6; so high, that they are established in heaven, Ps. cxix. 48; so long, that they endure for ever, 2 Pet. i.; and so broad, that none can measure them. They are not only broad, but exceeding broad: 'Higher than heaven, longer than the earth, broader than the sea.' The commands of God reach the inward parts, the most secret motions and retired recesses of the soul. They reach all the privy thoughts. They pierce even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb. iv. 12. They reach to all our actions; to those that seem smallest and of less concernment, as well as to those that are greater and of more concernment.

They reach to the manner, nay, circumstance, of actions. The divine law takes notice of all the circumstances of sins as aggravations of sin. As, 1. From the time of God's patience towards the sinner: 'These three years I came seeking fruit,' Luke xiii. 2. The place where the sin was committed: 'The sons of Eli lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,' 1 Sam. ii. 22. 3. From the season of committing the sin, Isa. lviii. 3, 4: 'Behold, in the day of your fast, ye find pleasure, and exact all your labour,' &c. 4. From the condition of the person that sins: 'He that eats bread with me lifts up his heels against me,' John xiii. 18. A familiar friend proves a treacherous enemy. So John iii. 10, 'Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?' 5. From the means the person enjoys: 'You only have I known, therefore you will I punish for

your iniquities;' Amos iv.; Rom. ii. 7. 6. From the manner of committing the sin: 'So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel,' 2 Sam. xvi. 22. Impudency in sin doth highly increase it. 'Were they ashamed when they committed all these abominations? No, they were not ashamed.' But how far are other religions from observing, much more from condemning, men for such sinful circumstances!

CHAPTER XXXI.

The holiest have cause of humiliation.

Use 8. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission—'I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat,' &c.—then it may inform us, that the best have abundant cause of humiliation; for the best have in them abundant matter of condemnation. Oh, how many are our omissions every day, every hour! and by reason of them we are obnoxious to hell flames. Good Bishop Usher, who, for piety and learning, was honoured through the Christian world; though he was early converted, and feared the Lord in his youth; though he was eminently industrious in private, in his family, in catechising and instructing, and praying often every day with and for them that were committed to his charge; though he was a constant preacher, and that with judgment and affection; though he was singularly famous for his many worthy pieces which he wrote in Latin and English, yet, after all this diligence and labour, when he came to die, the last words almost which he was heard to speak were, Lord, in special forgive my sins of omissions.[1] Sins of omission will at death lie heavier on our hearts than we think for in life. If such a laborious person found cause of bewailing his omissions, surely much more cause have loiterers as we are.

Omissions are fruits of original corruption, as well as commissions. It is from that dead stock that we are so defective in bringing forth good fruit. Paul layeth his omissions at this door: Rom. vii. 17–23, 'In my flesh is no good. When I would do good, evil is present with me,' &c. Now, whatsoever is the child of such a monstrous parent is loathsome, and calls on us for sorrow and self-abhorrence. Holy Job did but suspect his children to be

[1] Usher's Life.

guilty of omissions, of not sanctifying the name of God in their hearts, according to their duties, at their feasts and meetings: 'And he riseth early and offereth sacrifice, according to the number of them all,' Job i. 4, 5. He goeth to God, and begs pardon for them, and the blessing of God upon every one of them: 'It may be,' saith he, 'my sons have sinned, and cursed' (and not blessed God, so Calvin reads it) 'God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.' Now if Job, upon a supposition that his sons might be guilty of omissions, was so constant in his addresses to God on their behalf, by way of humiliation, acknowledging their iniquity, and beseeching his mercy, what cause have we, on the behalf of our own souls, who know that we often offend God by omissions, and know not how often we offend him by them? God may say to thee and me, reader, 'Is not thy wickedness great, and iniquities infinite?' as he to Job, chap. xx. 5; where, by wickedness, expositors understand commissions, or those sins by which we prejudice or injure others; and by iniquities, omissions, by which we neglect, according to our duties, to relieve others. And Eliphaz calls his wickedness great, because, as I have shewed in the first information, they are in some respects greater, more heinous, than sins of omission; and his iniquities infinite, because sins of omission are more numerous than sins of commission. Corrupt nature can much better forbear what it hath an inclination and propensity to, than do that which it hath a dislike of, and an enmity against.

For their nature, I have proved that they are very ponderous, that they are breaches of a positive law, grieve the Holy Ghost, provoke God, defile the conscience, yea, and destroy the soul for ever—how light soever some make of them—and for their number they are infinite, beyond all account or reckonings. If they were small sins, their number would compensate their lightness; grains of sand are little, but a heap of them together is weighty: Prov. xxvii. 3, 'The sand is weighty.' 'In many things we offend all,' James iii. 2. Now, how should the nature and number of these sins humble us every day before the Lord! What hour is there when we are awake wherein we may not do more good than we do? When did we, in visiting a friend, or conferring with a neighbour, advantage their souls as we might and ought? Can we say that we have been as diligent in our callings, as watchful and exemplary in our conversations, as thankful for our mercies, as fruitful under the ordinances of God, and as faithful in the improvement of our talents, as we are commanded to be? Do we every day pray and read Scripture in our closets and families with that holy reverence,

humility, faith, seriousness, and integrity which God requireth? Do not worldly concerns now and then contend with, and jostle out, the worship of the great God—at least cause us to slip our prayers, and adjourn the Scripture's reading till a more convenient season? Are we every week-day laborious in our callings, out of conscience to God's precept, and not out of a principle of covetousness? Do we spend the greatest part of the day therein, without diversions by vain companions, or needless recreations? Are our affections in heaven, and our hearts above, while our actions are earthly, and our hands are busy here below? And do we deal in all things with others as we would, in the judgment of sound reason, that others should deal with us? Mat. vii. 12. Is our daily carriage towards our relations sober, pious, affectionate, exemplary, and in all things as becomes the gospel of Christ? Oh, how many are our omissions, and what millions of them are we guilty of, and therefore they call aloud upon us to mourn for them! Others are in hell, and must weep for ever for them, where their sighs, and sobs, and prayers, and tears, will no way advantage them. Blessed be God, it is not so with us: though their tears will prove their hell, our tears, through the blood of Christ, may prove our heaven. Nehemiah, in the day of his solemn humiliation with the Jews, acknowledgeth and bewaileth their omissions, their not hearkening to his commands, and their not minding the wonders that he wrought for them, Neh. ix. 16, 17. So Daniel, when he fasted and prayed, and confessed his sins, and the sins of his people, bewails their omissions: Dan. ix. 6, 'We have not hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, and princes, and fathers, and to all the people of the land;' ver. 10, 'We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets;' ver. 13, 'All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God.' What then? why, he judgeth himself and his people for these sins, and justifieth God in all his severity. 'O Lord, righteousness belongs to thee, but to us confusion of face, as at this day, to the men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem,' ver. 7. So again, 'O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee,' ver. 8. Omissions must be lamented in this or the other world; we must all be ashamed of them here or hereafter; and is it not much better to bewail them here, than to bewail them in hell; to judge and condemn ourselves for them, than to be judged and condemned by God for them at the great day? Ah, at what a

cheap rate may a Christian, by repentance, prevent that blow that will separate him and all his happiness, and bring him to that repentance which will ever be repented of, but all to no purpose! Oh, it is good to be wise on this side another world!

CHAPTER XXXII.

Use of trial, whether we be guilty of these omissions or no.

Use 2. This doctrine may be useful in the second place by way of examination or trial. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, then it concerns us to examine ourselves, whether or no we are of the number of them that shall be condemned for them at that day. Reader, it will not be amiss for thee to retire out of the crowd of the world into thy chamber, and there to commune with thine own heart concerning thy present condition, and how thou art like to fare for the future; nay, it is of infinite weight and concernment, and may be as much worth as thy soul and eternal salvation. How many prove bankrupts, and are quite undone for this world, for want of a timely casting up their accounts. If they had cast up their accounts before, and perceived how far they had run behind-hand, they might have retrenched their expenses, and advised and consulted some way to have prevented their utter destruction; but they neglected to cast up their accounts, till their accounts cast them up, and it was too late to think of recalling what was past, or remedying what was amiss. Thus many that are professors, or Christians in title, deal with their own souls, and defer the trial of their estates till it be too late to amend anything amiss. If they would now in their health and strength search and try their hearts and ways, if they found things ill, they would have advantages and opportunities through the help of Christ to make them better: 'They might seek the Lord while he would be found, and call upon him while he is near.' They might sue and seek to Christ for eye-salve, that they might see the things of their peace; for raiment to hide their nakedness, that it might not appear to their everlasting shame; and for gold to enrich them for ever, to make them more worth than both worlds: if upon a faithful trial they found things well, it would rejoice their hearts, encourage them in ways of holiness, and confirm them against Satan's temptations to despair. But men generally neglect their examinations till God comes to examine

them, as the rulers commanded Paul to be examined, with scourgings and scorpions. They presume all is well, hope the best, and would be sorry any should question their estates, and thus persist in their self-deceits, till they come to appear before God, that the gate of mercy be shut, and the golden sceptre of grace be wholly withdrawn, and their estates become as desperate as the estates of the devils.

To urge this use a little, reader, consider these two particulars:

1. Consider of what weight it is, and how much depends upon this question: Am I of the number of them that shall be condemned for sins of omission or not? Or am I guilty of omissions, so as to be banished the presence of Christ for them or not? I tell thee, thy eternal joy or sorrow, happiness or misery, pleasure or pain, depends on it. Do but read and consider, and then say whether it be not of infinite weight: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink,' &c. On the other side, 'Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,' &c. Friend, are not these weighty things, that depend on the performance or neglect of these positive precepts? 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' Is not a coming close, near, intimate, familiar, into his very bosom and dearest embraces, to Christ, a weighty thing? To come to Christ here is so weighty, that he came to men into this world to call them to him, Mat. xi. 28, and ix. 13; but to come to Christ there in all his robes, and riches, and royalty, in all his beauty, and glory, and magnificence, will questionless be of more concern to the soul. On the contrary, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' Is there not weight, reader, in these words? Dost thou know what it is to bid Christ farewell, farewell for ever, to take an eternal leave of all good? Canst thou bear the extremity of our culinary fires for a day? Canst thou dwell in everlasting burnings, or abide unquenchable flames? Thou seest all this depends upon thy performing or neglect of the divine positive precepts. Doth it not concern thee, in a matter of such weight, to be faithful in a trial of thyself? Friend, are life and death, are eternal life and eternal death, indifferent things, or things of small moment? Are an eternal enjoyment of God, or an endless separation from God, mean or trivial things? Oh, how infinitely do they exceed and over-balance thy understanding! How short must thou of necessity come of conceiving of these

things according to their weight? Alas, friend, what pitiful toys and trifles are houses, and lands, and friends, and relations, and honours, and preferments, ay, and liberty, and this temporal life, to an eternal happy life!

2. Consider, all are guilty of omissions, even the good as well as the bad, and therefore the more faithfulness, and prudence, and caution is requisite, lest we mistake. If saints and sinners are both guilty of omissions, how shall I know whether my omissions are such as will consist with salvation, unless I try and examine myself? The good man, being guilty of omissions, may fear the dreadful sentence of 'Go, ye cursed,' &c. And the wicked man, knowing that the best are guilty of many omissions as well as he, may presume upon the joyful sentence, 'Come, thou blessed of my Father,' &c. How shall each be rectified in his mistake, and satisfied in the truth, but by an impartial and thorough examination of himself? God hath given us a test, which is the word of truth, Eph. i. 13, whereby we may try ourselves, and prevent all mistakes. Where there is a possibility of a mistake in a business of such infinite weight, there is sufficient ground for a serious trial; but where there is so great a probability of mistaking, as a thing that is so easy and ordinary, because all men are guilty too much of omissions, there is a necessity of a faithful and impartial trial. There is that maketh himself rich—in temporals he is worth thousands, in spirituals he is rich towards God, and worth millions—yet hath nothing (orig., yet nothing, in him or to him he is nothing, he hath nothing for all his brags;) there is that makes himself poor—speaks himself poor, would have others think him poor—yet hath great riches, (Heb., yet much substance; the man hath a great estate, but is willing to conceal it. Merchants, who are worth thousands, do not publish or boast of their wares or wealth about the city; these poor creatures do it, who carry all their worth on their heads, or in their arms.) Junius reads the words well, *Est qui divitem se jactat quum desint omnia, item qui pauperem se fingit cui substantia ampla.* There is that boasts himself rich, to whom all things are wanting; and that feigns himself poor, yet hath large substance. There is that boasts and brags himself rich in the fear and favour of God, and will tell you of his communion and converses with the divine majesty, of his love to, and delight in the ways, and people, and ordinances of God; when all these things are wanting to him, he hath nothing at all in reality of any of them. There is that feigns himself poor, that dissembles, as it were, his estate, that is a beggar, as some read the word poor here,

in his own account, and would have all others judge him so too; he is so covetous after more, that he overlooks what he hath; and so greedy of further attainments, that he takes little notice of his present spiritual enjoyments. If you will believe him, he is a mere beggar, hath not one bit of bread to eat, and if his Father, in whose house there is bread enough and to spare, do not pity and relieve his prodigal child, he shall perish for hunger; yet this man hath much substance, is a man of worth and wealth indeed. He is like a branch mightily laden with fruit, and an ear fully laden with corn, which the heavier they are laden, the more they bow down to the ground. A mere titular Christian, like an empty vessel, may make a great sound, but the full vessel, that contains the precious liquor, is silent.

I come now to the marks whereby men may know their estates. And for that end I shall lay down several propositions.

Prop. 1. Those that live in commissions as well as omissions must certainly be condemned at the great day. These bid open defiance to the prohibitions, precepts, and penalty of the law, and dare the law to do its worst. Either these must be condemned, or all shall be saved. But God is of a holier nature than to dwell with such sinners. They may read their doom written under his own hand, and, like the law of the Medes and Persians, that cannot be altered, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10; Eph. v. 5; Rom. viii. 5, 'To be carnally minded is death;' ver. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh ye shall die.'

Prop. 2. They who are guilty of total external omissions, are in a damnable condition. This is written in broad letters, that he who runs may read it. They who pray not are under wrath, and the effusions of wrath, Jer. x. 25. They who neglect to pay their external allegiance to the true God, and deny him his outward homage and acknowledgment, shall be denied and disowned by Christ, before his Father, and before his holy angels. The holy God doth all along speak of these as heathens, Ps. lxxix. 6, and sinners with a witness, Ps. xxxvi. 1-3; and threateneth that Christ shall come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them, 2 Thes. ii. 7–10. Those who are guilty of these total omissions, in regard of the matter of the duties commanded them, are ungodly in the highest degree, (for ungodliness strictly and properly speaks the neglect of our duties to God, and sins against the first table, as unrighteousness, the neglect of our duties to our neighbour, and our transgressions against the second table,) and so none in the whole Scripture more obnoxious to wrath and ruin, Ps. lxxiii. 12. 'These are the ungodly who prosper in the world;' but mark how soon they

perish: ver. 18, 'Thou castest them down to destruction, and utterly consumest them with terrors;' 2 Pet. iii. 7; Jude 4, 15.

Prop. 3. Those who perform external duties, and wholly neglect internal, or please themselves in total inward omissions, cannot be in a state of salvation. God will not be put off with the body, without the soul of religion. Indeed, external duties are but the garments or clothes of religion, wherein it appears, and whereby it is known to the world; the life and power of it consists in internal performances, or those that are the motions and actions of the understanding, and will, and affections, as in the knowledge of God, his being and excellency, and the kindness he hath for, and the love he hath to, mankind in Jesus Christ; as also in the choosing him for our richest treasure, and supreme Lord and lawgiver, and in loving him with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and desiring his love above all the world, and delighting in his favour, as the soul's felicity, and seeking to please him, rather than to command the creation. A man without these is but the picture of a saint; he hath somewhat of the resemblance, but nothing of the reality of a Christian; he hath a form, but nothing of the power of godliness, 2 Tim. iii. 1-7, and therefore is in a state of perdition. The neglect of believing, repenting, loving the Lord Jesus Christ, are all inward omissions, for these are acts proper and peculiar to the soul, and condemned in Scripture with the most dreadful damnation, Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 36; Luke xiii. 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. If a man pray, and pray wholly without faith and without fervency, James i. and v., this is no way acceptable to God. All such prayers are howlings and babblings, and of no sweet sound in God's ears, Hosea vii.; Isa. i. 15–17. Whatsoever a man doth either by way of hearing, or singing, or praying, or receiving, if there be not that dread of God, and love to his name, and faith in Christ, which are the essentials of these duties, all is as nothing.

Prop. 4. Those who allow themselves in partial omissions, whether external or internal, are in no good condition. By partial omissions, I mean at some times; as for prayer; a man, it may be, prays in his closet or family usually, but if any worldly business intervene and calls for his company, he will as usually attend on that, and wholly omit his closet and family duties for that morning or evening. Or for a man to pray, as some do, only at the evening, and not in the morning, as if God were the God of the night, and not of the day; or as some others, who will pray only upon the Lord's-day, as if God had a right to them then, but not all the week after. Or when men perform some religious

duties, and not others, will pray, but not read Scripture daily, or pray, and read the word, but not take notice of those under their roofs, to instruct, and admonish, and support them, as occasion is. Or some will perform their duties which immediately concern God, but will not be charitable to the poor, at least not in such a degree and measure as their estates will bear, and as God expects. These, and suchlike, I understand by partial and external omissions. What is meant by internal partial omission is next to be considered. Partial internal omissions are, when men oftentimes, though not constantly, are negligent in the manner of performing their duties; and though they be formal, and superficial, and lazy, and slothful in the worship of God, yet they take little or no notice thereof. Indeed, sometimes they find some heat and warmth, and this pleaseth them; but at other times they are cold and lifeless in their duties, and this doth not much displease them. They can commonly pray as if they prayed not, and read as if they read not, and wait on God without any suitable and considerable affections towards him, and not be disturbed at it. These sudden heats at one time, and colds at another time, speak the body out of order, and the soul not healthy. The next thing to be explained is, what is meant by allowing themselves in partial omissions; and indeed the stress of the proposition depends on that. To allow themselves in these partial omissions notes these two things: to know these partial omissions to be sins, and yet to continue in them without any great disturbance or trouble of spirit. They must know that they are sins, otherwise continuance in them will not argue a total want of grace, or the predominant power of sensuality in the soul. I doubt not but in many dark places of this nation there may be those who live in a total omission of some duties, as praying with their families, and a strict sanctification of the Sabbath; or who yet fear God in truth, and make great conscience of their conversations. These men neglect prayer, and devoting the Sabbath wholly to God, &c., because they do not know them to be their duties. And where a man desires and endeavours to know his master's will, and lives up to that light God hath given him, he may upon a general repentance expect pardon through the blood of Christ for sins of ignorance; but those who live under the clear, and plain, and full discovery of the gospel, must know that these omissions are sins. Their ministers are not so ignorant or unfaithful as to leave them in the dark about such necessary duties. 'Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin,' James iv. 17. The second thing in this allowance

is, to continue in these omissions, though we know them to be sins, and to be little or nothing troubled for them. And, I say, those who do so are in no good condition; they shall be condemned at the great day. And my reasons are partly because it is proper to a wicked man to continue in sins. A sheep may fall into the ditch and defile himself, but he hastens out of it as soon as he can; but the swine chooseth a dirty place, walloweth all the day long in the mud and mire. A saint may fall into sin, but he hasteneth to recover himself by repentance. A sinner lives in it day and night, Prov. iv. 17. It is their food in the day, and their refreshment in the night. Their sleep departeth from them, unless they cause some to fall. Hence we read, that sin is their way, or work, or conversation, Isa. lv. 7. Partly because allowance of any sin is inconsistent with grace. Sin and grace are contrary each to other; and, therefore, though they may be, and are in the same subject, yet they are not, they cannot be there together, but as enemies seeking the destruction one of another: 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other.' Fire and water are not more contrary than vice and grace, so that he who suffers vice without opposition declares plainly that he hath no grace, for these enemies never meet but they fight. Therefore, reader, examine thyself; thou hast laid down the commission of evil, but hast thou taken up every known duty? Thy reason will tell thee he is a bad husband who drains his ground, and then neither soweth nor planteth it. It is all one as if it had continued under water; as good be undrained, as unimproved when drained.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A caution against sins of omission in regard of the matter of duties.

Exhort. If Christ will condemn men at the great day for sins of omission, it may exhort us to mind the doing of good, as well as the forbearing of evil, to be as watchful against sins of omission, as well as against sins of commission, and make conscience of affirmative as well as negative commands. Do not think it sufficient to forbear what is evil, unless also thou dost what is good. It is good not to be evil in doing what the law forbids, but it is evil also not to be good in doing what the law enjoins. The minister is not a good minister, because he doth not seduce, or mislead, or deceive

his people by false doctrine, or scandalous living, if he do not teach them the right ways of the Lord, and be not instant with them, in season and out of season, to know, and adore, and honour their Maker and Redeemer. A good shepherd must look to good pastures for his sheep, as well as defend them from lions and wolves. Paul proves his integrity by this, that he kept nothing back that was profitable for his people, but taught them publicly, and from house to house, and that he declared unto them the whole counsel of God, Acts xx. 21, 22, 27. The magistrate is not a good magistrate, who can only say that he never oppressed or persecuted the innocent. He must be able to say with Job that he relieved them in their necessities, and redressed them in their grievances: 'I delivered the poor that cried, and him that had none to help. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth,' Job xxix. 12, 15, 17. The Christian is not a good Christian that can tell us that he is a harmless man, he doth no mischief, he wrongs none in thought, word, or deed. The barren tree brings forth no bad fruit, yet it is cut down for the fire. He is an evil man that neglects what is good, as well as he that follows what is evil.

Therefore, reader, cease to do evil, Ezek. xviii. 31; but let not that suffice, learn to do well, Isa. i. Remember to watch against what is evil. 'But also to do good and to distribute forget not: for with such sacrifice God is well pleased,' Heb. xiii. 16. To do good, and to pray in thy closet and family, and to read the Scriptures, and to instruct thy children and servants, and to sanctify the Lord's-day, and to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, forget not, for with such sacrifice God is well pleased, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Forsake the foolish,' this is well, but not enough, 'and walk in the way of understanding.'

The law of God must be kept tenderly, as the very apple of our eyes, Prov. vii. 2. The smallest dust will offend the eye, and the smallest omission will offend the law. If thy conscience be dispensatory, it is unholy. Friend, thou hast largely heard how far short a negative religion will bring thee of heaven, and canst thou content thyself a moment therewith? Nay, thou hast heard that for all that thou shalt be sent to hell, and wilt thou rest one day or night therein? O friend, be wise in time, and mind positive godliness whilst thou hast opportunity.

In these days of the gospel, God is quick and speedy, sharp and severe, with men that are barren and unfruitful. Behold now, saith the Baptist, the axe is laid to the root of the tree. Behold, con-

sider now at this time, when the Redeemer is coming, whose way I am preparing. Now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. He is now laying aside his basket, and taking up the axe; yea, he lays his axe at the root of the tree, as one taking aim where to strike, and how to fell the tree with the greatest advantage; therefore it concerns thee to be fruitful. Again, the apostle tells us that former times of gross darkness were overlooked by God, but now saith he, now his Son is come into the world, and he reveals his mercy and our duty so fully and clearly; now he commands men everywhere to repent,' Acts xvii. 29, 30. Now he exhorts fruits meet for repentance, or he will not wink at your disobedience, but judge you to hell flames. And believe it, the valley of vision will prove the heaviest burden, and the highest means will cast thy soul into the lowest misery. Opportunities of doing good to our own and others' souls are choice mercies; they are talents that must one day be reckoned for. Therefore, saith the blessed Redeemer in the justification of Mary about the ointment, 'Me ye have not always;' the poor ye have always, and may do them good when ye will; 'but me ye have not always.' Mary did well to improve the season she had in her hand, as knowing if once lost, it was lost for ever.

The apostle Paul upon this account adviseth the Galatians, 'While ye have time, do good to all,' Gal. vi. 10. Nothing more sads and dulls the heart when one comes to die, saith a divine now with God,[1] than his neglect of such opportunities which God's providence, or his own place, have put into his hands of doing or receiving good. Nor is there a sharper corrosive than the reflection upon those days and times that have passed over him, *male, aliud, nihil, agentem.* Ah, how sad and uncomfortable will it be for thy time to be gone, when thy work is not done! when thy sun is setting, and the shadows of the evening are stretching themselves upon thee, for conscience to give thee this salute, Thy day is passed, thy time is wasted, the business of life is neglected, and now thine errors can never, never be amended. Ah, what a dreadful hour will a dying hour be to thee, when conscience shall plead against thee with whips, and scorpions, and flames, and not the dearest friend or relation thou hast be admitted to plead for thee, or be able to comfort thee! But if the day of death will be so uncomfortable, how terrible will the day of judgment be! Then it is that the saint shall reap the benefit of all the good he hath done, and the sinner shall reap the mischief of all the good he

[1] Essex Herse, p. 19.

hath omitted or left undone. Then the idle servant that did not trade with his talent will be found an evil servant, and as such condemned to the 'worm that never dieth, and the fire that never goeth out,' Mat. xxv. Then the unfruitful factor will be found an unfaithful factor, and as such disowned and condemned by his Lord.

Reader, believe it, though thou mayest live by a negative religion, yet thou canst not die by it, much less stand before the judgment-seat of Christ with it. It is true, even such a religion is of high price with men; but if alone, it is abomination in the sight of God. Reader, let me reason the case with thee. In other things all are for fruitfulness in what is good. The husbandman would have his ground fruitful in good corn, as well as empty of weeds. He would have his cattle labour, and do him service, and thinks it not enough that they are in the stable or fields, and do him no hurt. The master would have his servant industrious in his shop or field, or some way or other about his business, and is not pleased to see him sit still all day, and forbear to purloin his goods, or fight with his fellow-servants. The father who sends his child to school would have him learn the languages, and profit daily therein, and without this will not be satisfied to hear that his child sits still all day at school, learns no oaths or blasphemies, calls no names, abuses none of his companions. And, reader, why should God be contented with thy harmlessness, when thou art barren and unprofitable? Hath not God as much right to thee as thou hast to thy ground or cattle? and art not thou as much bound to God as thy servant or child is bound to thee? and why then shouldst thou think to put God off with that in thyself, which thou wilt not be put off with in thy ground, or cattle, or servant, or child? Besides, I must tell thee, thou art not harmless if thou dost no good, though thou livest not in the commission of gross evils. The tree in the garden that brings not forth good fruit is hurtful, though it bring not forth evil fruit; partly because it cumbers the ground, and takes up room to no purpose; partly because it draws the moisture of the earth to it, and so hinders the thriving of those trees that are near it, who, but for them, would be more fruitful. So if thou neglectest what is good, though thou dost no open scandalous evil, thou art mischievous and hurtful in the place where thou livest. Thou takest up the room of a member that might be serviceable to God and his country. If thou wert gone, there might be one in thy house, place, lodging, kept and maintained by the great house-keeper of the world, with the same mercies with which thou livest, that

should adorn the gospel, glorify the name of God, and edify the souls of others; and dost thou no harm then by hindering such a one? Is not the drone hurtful, which idleth all the day, and lives upon the bees' labour, and forceth them sometimes to want because of her theft. Is not the wen in the body hurtful, when it serves to no use, yet sucks away the nourishment from other parts of the body? Doth not that factor wrong the master who employs him if he let his stock lie still, though he do not waste it in riotousness, and drunkenness, and filthiness, when the master might have had one in his place who would have traded with it, and probably have improved it to his great advantage? Did ever any merchant trust a servant with a stock to lie by him? Nay, is nature itself content with the removal of what is oppressive? doth it not long and breathe after what is perfective? Is not the presence of *malum*, what is evil, a burden? So the absence of *bonum*, what is good, occasion of complaint? There is ingrafted within us not only *bathos*, a depth of distaste against feared evils, but also *hiatus*, large desires after known good. As nature, much more doth religion, call men off what is bad, and provoke men to what is right, and just, and good.

Reader, let me come up a little closer to thee. What is it that I am advising thee to? Is it anything that is evil? If it be, reject and renounce it. Is it not to be good, and to do good? I will tell thee what I would desire of thee, and then do thou judge whether I advise thee as a friend, or whether my counsel be worth hearkening to or no.

1. Take heed of external omissions. If thou hast been faulty herein, I would advise thee every day to mind prayer, Scripture, watchfulness over thy heart, tongue, and actions, diligence in thy calling, faithfulness in thy relations, and to do good to others as thou hast opportunity. Hereby thou wilt acknowledge thy dependence on, and subsistence by, the blessed God, to whom thou art bound by millions of obligations; hereby thou wilt procure his protection of thy person, provision for thy family, and benediction on thy calling, and all thine undertakings. And is this ill counsel, to direct thee to the way how to procure his favour, which can sweeten the bitterest condition, and turn the most loathsome prison into a lovely palace, and a hell of misery into a heaven of mercy? Friend, do I advise thee for thy hurt, when I advise thee daily to walk and converse with the blessed and glorious God? Is not his law worth observing, his glory worth advancing, and his service worth minding, and his love worth accepting, when he can make

thee miserable or happy with a word in an instant; when thou and all thou hast are in his hand every moment, to be disposed of for good or evil, altogether at his pleasure; when he can, with the breath of his nostrils, with the blast of his lips, with the glance of his eye, send thee to hell, where the worm never dieth, and the fire never goeth out? Friend, consider it; is it not good advice to wish thee to sue and seek to him, to pray to and please him, upon whom thine unchangeable felicity or misery dependeth, and who shall judge thee to thine everlasting state of life or death? Is it not good to have the king thy friend? How many pleasures may he do thee? and how many favours may he bestow on thee? But how much better is it to have the King of kings thy friend? What pleasure is there which he cannot do thee? what favour which he cannot bestow on thee? He can give thee earth, heaven, riches, honours, pleasures, life, health, food, raiment, friends, relations, his day, his word, his ordinances, his love, his image, his peace, his joy, his Spirit, his Son, himself, every good, any good, all good. Oh how blessed is he that hath this God! But, reader, wouldst thou have all these without so much as asking for them? We say, they are poor favours that are not worth asking. Sure I am these mercies are of more value than thine understanding can conceive; and therefore must deserve more prayers, and tears, and groans for them than thou art capable of giving. Do not any day, upon any pretence, omit to offer up thy morning and evening sacrifices. Remember, so often as thou neglectest morning prayer, so often thou art all the day naked, destitute of thy spiritual guard, and exposed to all manner of evils and enemies, and dost forespeak thyself an evil day; and so often as thou omittest evening prayer thou presumest upon sleep, and rest, and safety, without God's leave, and forespeakest thyself an evil night. What did Thomas lose by one omission! Jesus appeared the first day of the week to his disciples, 'but Thomas,' saith the text, 'was not there,' John xx. 24. But what is the issue of this omission? Truly, by his neglecting this opportunity of confirming his faith, he falls into a desperate fit of unbelief. When the apostles told him that they had seen the Lord, he presently answers, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe,' John xx. 24, 25. Ah, what had become of Thomas if infinite Majesty had not stooped to recover him?

2. Take heed of internal omissions. In the next place, I advise thee to look seriously to the manner of thy performances, to be

sure that thou worship God with thy heart and affections. This is the chief, and substance, and heart of thy performances, according to which they shall be accepted or not. In all thy addresses draw nigh to God with a humble faith and confidence, as to a father ready, able, and willing to supply all thy wants, and answer all thy doubts, and to grant all thy prayers and desires; as also with a cheerful reverence and awfulness, as to a God infinite in his being and in all his perfections, between whom and thee, a poor worm, there is an infinite distance. In every duty let thy faith in Christ, thy love to God, and thy repentance from dead works, be exercised; hereby thy duties will be more comfortable to thyself. Men that perform duties in a round, out of custom or for fashion sake, have no pleasure therein, are backward to them, untoward at them, and careless after them. They come to them with trouble, as to that to which their hearts have a reluctancy, and go from them with joy, as from that which was burdensome and tedious to them. But when men pray with a sense of their wants, and beg mercy, with hope in the blood of Christ, and have their love and joy acted in their duties, how sweetly do they come off! nay, how pleasant are they in the very performance of them! Communion with God in them brings peace and comfort indeed. Now, reader, do I advise thee to thy hurt when I advise thee to the life of a saint, to the life of an angel, to a life of love, and joy, and delight in the Father of mercies, and God of all consolations? Is not this life the suburbs, the earnest, the first-fruits of the life of the blessed, of the life of those heavenly courtiers who bathe themselves without intermission in springs of joy and in rivers of pleasures? And by this care of thine about the manner of performing thy duties they will be the more acceptable to God. He commands the heart, Prov. xxiii. 26; delights in truth in the inward parts, Ps. li.; and is nigh to them that call upon him in truth, Ps. xxxiv. How pleasing would it be to thee to know thy prayers and readings to be pleasing to God: Jer. xxx. 21, 'And I will cause him to draw near and to approach unto me, (*i.e.*, with welcome and acceptance,) for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?' If thou bring thy heart to a duty, God will bring his ear to hear thee.

In the prosecution of this use, I shall, first, Lay down some arguments or motives to enforce it.

2. Lay down the cause of these omissions which are so frequent among us.

3. Prescribe somewhat for the cure and remedy thereof.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Arguments against omissions. The positiveness of our rule, and of God's mercies.

I begin with the first, viz., The arguments to move us to mind positive duties.

1. Consider, the law which God hath given us for the rule of our lives is both positive and negative, and therefore our obedience must be such. What need positive precepts but to require positive practices? Single prohibitions would have sufficed for a negative religion. 'The law is holy, (in its commands that immediately concern God,) just, (in what it commands concerning our neighbours,) and good,' (in what it commands concerning ourselves,) Rom. vii. 12. Look to the moral law, every negative command hath a positive precept. Take the prophets all along that speak in the name of the Lord, and we shall find that they still enjoin duty as well as forbid sin: Deut. xii. 29 to the end, 'Take heed that thou be not snared by following the nations that are destroyed before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' Here is sin forbidden; but mark also duty is commanded: 'What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.' Nay, a copy of this law, both positive and negative, must be written out by the magistrate that we might observe it; and it was also written in a book by Moses, and put into the ark, as a witness against the Israelites if they should not observe it, Deut. xxxi. 24–26. Joshua succeeds Moses in his charge over the Jews, and in his commands to them both affirmatively and negatively, Joshua xxiii. 7. Samuel follows after, and speaks the same language: 'Serve the Lord with all your heart, fear him, and serve him in truth: and turn ye not aside, for then ye should go after vain things, which cannot profit or deliver; for they are vain,' 1 Sam. xii. 20, 21, 24. David doth the like: 'Depart from evil, and do good,' Ps. xxxiv. 14. Solomon writes after his father's copy in the very qualifications of those whom he entreats mercy for: 'If they sin, and afterwards bethink themselves and turn, (*i.e.*, from their sins,) and return unto thee with all the heart and with all the soul, then hear thou from heaven, from thy dwelling-place,' 2 Chron. vi. 36–40. Isaiah calls on men not only to forsake their evil ways and evil thoughts, but also to return unto

the Lord, Isa. lv. 7. Jeremiah crieth to his people not to oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows; and also thoroughly to execute judgment between a man and his neighbour, Jer. vii. 5, 6. So Ezekiel and the rest of the prophets, Ezek. xviii. 21. Our Saviour, in his exposition of the law, doth forbid what is evil and command what is good, Mat. v. 43, 44; so Mat. vii. *per tot.* The apostle St Paul commands not to be conformed to the world, there is the prohibition, 'but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, proving what is the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God,' there is the precept, Rom. xii. 1, 2. Again, 'Put off the works of darkness, put on the armour of light': 'Put off the old man, which is corrupt according to his deceitful lusts; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 23, 24. 'Lie not one to another, but speak the truth.' The apostle St James tells us religion consisteth in negatives and positives also, James i. 21, 22, 26, 27. So St Peter, 1 Pet. i. 14, 15, and ii. 11, 12; St John, 1 Ep. iii. 9, 10; Jude, ver. 21-23. Thus we see through the whole Bible the mind of God, by his messengers, to be positive as well as negative, and this mind of his he hath ordained to be the rule of our hearts and lives; and what shall we answer when we shall be called to an account for our disobedience? To what purpose is a rule if it be not followed? and to what end is the penalty denounced against the ungodly if it be not executed?

This is the voice of the law of God; and therefore, reader, either thou must betake thyself to practical godliness, or else disown the Scriptures for thy rule and square. Thy duty must, at least in thy desires and endeavours, carry some proportion to thy standard and rule, or else thy religion is a mere cipher, and signifieth nothing.

So far as the best come short of the law they sin: 1 John v. 3, 'Sin is a transgression of the law.' And that because the law is given to him as a rule of life, God hath therefore qualified it with the properties of a rule. 1. A rule must be perfect, and not defective, not redundant: 'The law of the Lord is perfect,' Ps. xix. 7. 2. A rule must be plain, not dark: 'All her ways are plain to him that understandeth.' 3. A rule must be published and known, otherwise it is a snare to entrap men. God hath proclaimed his law: 'The command is not hidden from thee, nor far off,' Deut. xxx. 11. 'It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us thither, and fetch it thence, that we may hear it and do it? Nor beyond the seas. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart,' ver. 12-14, 'that thou mayest

do them.' 4. A rule is that by which men shall be judged, so is this law: John xii. 48, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you at the last day.'

2. The mercies of God to thee are positive as well as privative, and why should not thy duty be suitable to the divine bounty? God is not only a shield to defend thee from evil in thy body, in thy soul, in thy person, in thy relations, in thine outgoings and in thine incomings, by night and by day, at all times and in all places; but he is also a sun to refresh thee with good, with temporal good, food, raiment, friends, relations, sleep, liberty, wealth, esteem in the world, &c. With spiritual good, with Sabbaths, Scriptures, sacraments, seasons of grace, with the tenders of pardon, and peace, and adoption, and eternal salvation, upon excellent and equitable terms. And what reason can we give why our obedience should not bear a proportion to his beneficence? 'He is a sun and a shield, and gives grace and glory, and withholdeth no good things from them that walk uprightly,' Ps. lxxxiv.

Shall God withhold no good thing from thee, and canst thou find in thy heart to deny the doing of any good thing for him? Is his bounty of so large an extent as to comprehend protection from all evil, and the fruition of all good? and must thy duty be so narrow and scanty, as if he did not deserve so much as he requireth? Is it honest to receive or buy in by one measure, and to return and sell out by another? 'Divers weights and divers measures, both of them are abomination to the Lord.'

A weight and a weight, a measure and a measure, one to buy with that is large, another to sell with that is less; I only allude to it. It is abominable for thee to receive of God by the largest measure, and to return to him by the least. Reader, if thou art born of God, and guilty of these partial, temporary omissions, consider it seriously, let ingenuity plead for God. When he first wrought upon thy soul, he did not only translate thee out of the kingdom of darkness, but also bring thee into the kingdom of his dear Son. He did not only turn thee from Satan, but also cause thee to return to himself. He brought thee out of a state of wrath, and brought thee into a state of love and favour, 1 Peter ii. 9. He redeemed thee from those enemies which had carried thee captive, sin, Satan, death, hell, Rom. vi. 11; Eph. ii. 3, 4; Heb. ii.; 2 Tim. i. 9, 10; 1 Thes. i. 10. But this is not all; he hath also 'brought thee into the glorious liberty of the children of God,' Rom. viii. 21; 1 John iii. 1. He hath delivered thee from this present evil world, that its affrightments, its allurements, that all its power and policy,

shall not be able to destroy thee; but this is not all, he hath made thee an heir of a better world. Of a child of the devil, thou art made a child of God, of a slave to sin, a citizen of Sion; nay, he doth not only free thee from damnation and the curse of the law, but also give thee the blessing of eternal life, in and with himself, among his innumerable company of angels, and the congregation of the first-born. Now, reader, judge whether it be not very disingenuous to receive from God all sorts of mercies, and to give to God not half the duties we owe to him. How canst thou mete to God one measure, and expect from him another? Friend, God doth not put thee off with half happiness, and why shouldst thou put him off with half holiness?

CHAPTER XXXV.

Arguments against omissions. Christ purchased positive as well as negative holiness, and our privileges oblige to both.

3. Consider, Christ died to purchase positive as well as negative godliness for men, and wilt thou disappoint him of the fruits of his death? Indeed, if it had been possible for him to have bought man's deliverance from sin without the re-impression of God's image on the soul, he had been but half a Saviour, and made us at the most but half happy. But according to the apostle's phrase, he saves perfectly, or to the utmost, upon all accounts and in all respects, Heb. vii. 25, and in order thereunto bought man off from sin, and unto the service of God. He redeems us from sin: 'We are redeemed,' saith the apostle, 'from our vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers; not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and blemish,' 1 Peter i. 17–19. He redeems also unto his own service: chap. iii. 18, of the same epistle, 'He suffered the just for the unjust, to bring us to God.' He died that we might die to sin; and he died that we might live to God. He suffered to bring us off from our cursed, loathsome lusts; and he suffered to bring us to the fear, and love, and service of the blessed and glorious Lord. We have both these ends of our Saviour's sufferings mentioned in Titus ii. 14, 'Who gave himself (his death is called a giving himself, because it was voluntary, and a freewill offering) for us, (here is his passion; but what ends had he in his eye? truly both these,) that he might

redeem us from all iniquity, (make us negatively religious, in freeing us from the bondage of sin,) and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' *i.e.*, make them positively holy. None are purified without positive qualifications, and gracious habits in the soul. To be purified unto himself, is to be thus qualified for the honour and service of Christ. And to make it more plain, the apostle tells us, to 'purify unto himself a peculiar people, (a people that shall disown all other lords, and all other work, and shall be his servants, and do his work only,) zealous of good works.' He did not die only to make men good, and to enable men to do good, but also to cause them to do good with heat, and heart, and fervency of spirit. Nay, it is evident, that to make men positively pious was the main and principal end of his passion, and that his delivering us from sin was only in order to this, to his adorning us with sanctity. As a man cannot put on new robes till he hath first put off his old rags, so a man cannot put on the new man, the beautiful image of the heavenly, till he hath put off the old man, the abominable image of the earthly Adam: Luke i. 74, 75, 'We are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.' He plougheth up the fallow ground of the heart, and kills the weeds of sin, in order to the casting in the seed of grace into the soul.

Now, reader, consider, if Christ died to purchase positive holiness for thee, what hope canst thou have of an interest in his death without it? Canst thou think he bought one for thee without the other, or that thou mayest be a partial sharer in his death? And what wilt thou do without an interest in his sufferings? Except he wash thee in his blood thou hast no part in him; and if thou hast no part in him, thy part must be among devils and damned spirits. Again, wilt thou by thy omissions deny and deprive Christ of that service which he hath bought so dearly? Alas! how little is it that thou art able to do for him when thou dost all thou canst! And how much did that cost him! what pangs and throes did he bear! what rage from men! what wrath from God! How did he wrestle with the frowns and fury, with the power and policy, of the world and hell! And after all this, dost thou grudge him that poor service for which he was hungry, and thirsty, and weary, and tempted, and betrayed, and crucified? 'Whether we live,' saith the apostle, 'we live to the Lord; whether we die, we die to the Lord; whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.' To this end Jesus died, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the

dead and living,' Rom. xiv. 7, 8. Thou wouldst take it ill thyself to be denied the service of that for which thou hast so dearly paid. Oh think of it, when thou art guilty of omissions in the matter or manner of duties, I now rob Jesus Christ of that which he bought with his most precious blood, and let him see the travail of his soul upon thee, and be satisfied.

4. Consider, the privileges thou enjoyest call aloud upon thee to mind positive holiness, and to do good as well as to forbear evil. I am sure thy privileges are positive, and so should thy piety be. What is the gospel but a cabinet of precious jewels, a river of living water, a case of the richest and costliest cordials, a counterpart of heaven's eternal court-rolls concerning the philanthropy or kindness of God to mankind, wherein are all sorts of blessings for body and soul in every condition treasured up? The enjoyment of it is a special singular privilege, the ministration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9. The ministration of righteousness, far above the legal ministration. The psalmist tells us the laws God gave to the Israelites were a special distinguishing mercy: 'He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with every nation; as for his judgments they have not known them,' Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20. But his gospel dispensation is a higher and greater favour. But what doth this gospel privilege call for? surely positive as well as negative godliness. 'The grace of God, (the gospel is so-called because it declares it to us, 2 Tim. i. 10, and interests us in it as an instrument thereof, Rom. i. 16,) which bringeth salvation, (which proclaimeth life upon holy conditions,) teacheth us that denying all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, (commissions against the first and second table, but that is not all,) we should live righteously, soberly, and godly, (righteously towards men, soberly in relation to ourselves, godly in the duties that concern God,) in this present evil world.' The gospel allows of omissions no more than the law, and is so far from indulging men in sin, because it hath mercy for the penitent sinner, that it addeth stronger obligations to obedience, and threateneth more severe condemnation to the disobedient, 2 Cor. v. 15, 16; Heb. x. Again, the promises which have in their bowels all the good of heaven and earth, all the blessings of this life and a better, which are as much worth as both worlds, 1 Tim. iv. 8, which are exceeding great in their quantity, and precious in their quality, 2 Peter i. 4, and the peculiar portion of God's own children, Heb. vi. 17, who are the only heirs of them, and all others strangers to them, and therefore miserable and in a hopeless and desperate condition.

These promises are so far from excusing or exempting from these positive duties, that they engage us the more firmly to them: 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore, dearly beloved, these promises,' that God will be our Father, and we shall be his children, &c, chap. vi. ver. 18, 'let us cleanse ourselves from all pollutions of flesh and spirit, (but this is not all,) and perfect holiness in the fear of God.' The promises do not only bind to purity, but also to proficiency therein, till we come to perfection: 'And perfect holiness in the fear of God.' The covenant of grace, which is a mine of unsearchable riches, a book wherein every leaf, nay, every line, speaks love and life, which contains more mercy in it, even the boundless God, than heaven and earth are able to contain; this requires positive as well as negative holiness, Deut. xxvi. 17, nay, it engageth for both, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'From all your idols, and from all your filthiness, will I cleanse you;' but more than this, ver. 26, 27, 'I will take away your heart of stone, and give you a heart of flesh; I will put my Spirit into you, and ye shall keep my commandments and do them.' So that all these privileges are to no purpose if we be not provoked by them to do good, and perform the duties which are the conditions of them. Reader, think of it, why should God give thee precepts, to direct thee about the matter and manner of performing thy duties and promises, to encourage thee to diligence and faithfulness therein, if thou mayest live in the omission of them? Surely such infinite cost calls for some great care and conscientiousness in thy conversation. Might not God, by virtue of his dominion over thee, as grand proprietor of the universe, have required this at thine hands? but when he is so gracious as to sue to thee, and to allure thee, and seek to draw thee by such cords of love, wilt thou stand out and deny him? Oh blush for shame, that thou hast neglected so long the wooings, and beseechings, and entreaties of such a glorious gospel, and such precious promises, and such an inestimable covenant! The greater the charge God is at with thee, the greater should be the service thou dost him. Where the ground is well dunged, and dressed, and watered, and manured, a greater crop is expected by the husbandman. I must tell thee, friend, that thou wilt one day find 'that to whom much is given, of him much will be required,' Luke xii. 48, and that God expects returns answerable to thy receipts. Do not imagine, as some vainly have done, that the bare enjoyment of these privileges will save thee. I must tell thee, and that from God's own mouth, they will be so far from it, that they will make hell-fire the hotter for thee, and much deepen thine eternal con-

demnation, Mat. xi. 21–23; Jer. vii. 3, 4, 'Amend your ways and your doings, and trust not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.' Such privileges without positive holiness do but usher men to a hotter hell.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Arguments against omissions. We profess ourselves God's servants, and all our religion will come to nothing without positive holiness.

5. Consider, you are the professed servants of God, and will you not do your master's business? You are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; you own your baptism by your attendance on God, though but sometimes, in public ordinances. You wear the livery of Christ before the world, and if any ask you what you are, you say a Christian; or whose you are, you say you belong to Jesus Christ. And, friend, will you pretend to be God's servant and neglect his business? This is but to put a mock and cheat upon him. Like him in the Gospel, who, when he was bid go work in the vineyard, said, 'I go, but went not.' 'If I be a master, where is your fear?' Mal. i. 7. If God be your master, where is your fear of displeasing him, either by neglecting what he enjoins, or doing what he forbids? True, servants are not at their own, but at their master's pleasure and disposal, as the centurion's soldiers, when the master saith, 'Go, they go;' when he saith, 'Come, they come;' when he saith, 'Do this, they do it,' Mat. viii. 9. The Redeemer himself, when he took upon him the form of a servant, and became so to his Father, Phil. ii. 7; Isa. liii. 10, did not what he himself would: 'I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me,' John vi. 30; 'And as the Father gave me commandment, so do I,' John xiv. 31. And to shew his faithfulness in that relation, when he came to die, he tells his Father, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, and finished the work thou hast given me to do,' John xvii. Nay, the very irrational and inanimate creatures are the servants of God, and as such do him positive service. The psalmist speaks of the heavens and the earth, with the creatures therein. All are thy servants, at thy beck and bidding, at thy call and command, Ps. cxix. 91. If thou speak to the sun, it riseth not; if thou speak again, it will stand still; if

thou speak a third time, it will move faster or slower, which thou pleasest.

If thou commandest the stars, they will fight in their courses against thine enemies, and serve thee faithfully after their manner, as their Lord of hosts.

Nay, those creatures which seem most stubborn and rebellious, being God's servants, are pliable to his pleasure: 'Fire, and hail, and stormy winds, fulfil his word,' Ps. cxlviii. 8. Reader, what dost thou think of these examples? thou seest the highest, the heir of all things, when he became his servant, did his will and work, for thee fulfilled all righteousness, and went about doing good, Acts x.; and thou seest the lowest beings, God's servants, do not only forbear doing evil, but after their manner, analogically they do good, and positively serve God; and wilt thou content thyself with a bare forbearance of what is evil, and be shamed by inanimate creatures, who according to their natures in their places do good? Why dost thou call thyself a Christian, if thou wilt not follow the pattern of Christ? and how canst thou profess thyself God's servant, if thou wilt not do him service? 'Know ye not,' saith the apostle, 'that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey,' Rom. vi. 16. Either obey God as a servant ought, or disown him to be thy master. Can he be said to be thy servant who neglects thy work, though he do thee no mischief? Another man's servant in this respect may as properly be said to be thine; for as he minds not thy business, so he doth thee no prejudice. I must speak plainly to thee; if thou allowest thyself in these omissions, thy practices give the lie to thy profession, and thou art the devil's servant, though thou wearest God's livery. I shall end this head with commending to thee the counsel of Christ! You call me Lord and master, and thou sayest well, for so I am. If I then your Lord and master have washed your feet, and gone about doing good, how much more should you my servant?

6. Consider, all your religion is nothing, and will come to nothing, if you live in the neglect of God's positive will. And will you deny yourself once and again in forbearing many things that would delight and gratify your flesh, and possibly incur the anger of your profane neighbours, for not running with them to the same excess of riot, and then lose all for want of doing what is commanded thee? Wouldst not thou think him a foolish husbandman, that should take care for the casting out the stones, and plucking up the weeds out of his ground, and then lose all his cost and pains for want of

sowing it with good seed? Would it not vex a scrivener, after he had taken much pains, and spent much time about a large deed, or conveyance, after he had taken great care to write it fair, without any blots, to be forced to write all over again, for his omission of some material passage in it? The apostle writes to the elect lady, 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.' If he that doth not persevere in well-doing may deprive himself of all the benefit of his good deeds which he hath already done, what benefit can they expect who never began to do good? How can their good works follow them to their comfort into the other world, who never did any? Or how can God register their prayers, and watchings, and fastings, and weepings for sin, and acts of devotion in his book of remembrance who never minded them, Rev. xiv. 13; Mal. iii. 7. Christ tells us, 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his works,' Rev. xxii. 12. Now, reader, if thou contentest thyself in thine omissions, what works hast thou for Christ to reward? All the reward of a negative holiness is but a cooler hell, and, God knoweth, that is small comfort. Thou hast no work of faith, or labour of love, or patience of hope, or fervency in prayer, or breathings and longings after conformity to, and communion with, the blessed God, for Christ to record and reward. The Holy Ghost, when he tells us that 'God will render to every man according to his deeds,' presently subjoins, 'To them who by patient continuance in well-doing (*i.e.*, positive holiness) seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, everlasting life,' Rom. ii. 6, 7. *Virtutis est magis honesta agere quam non turpia*, as he said well: It is rather the property of virtue to do things laudable, than not to do things loathsome.

A negative Christian in God's account is no Christian; and though he may stand for somewhat among men that are no better than himself, yet he is a mere cipher in the account of God. God seeth that, as he is not outwardly bad, so he is not inwardly good; and that he is at a greater distance from piety than from profaneness, and he looking most to the heart and bent thereof, Ps. li. 7; 1 Sam. xv., must needs loathe a filthy, unclean conscience, under a fair, civil conversation.

A tree may be full of vermin, when the green leaves may hide them from the eyes of men; so the vermin of pride, and unbelief, and hypocrisy may crawl in thy heart, though thy civility may hide them from the sight or suspicion of thy fellow-creatures. We say,

All is not gold that glitters, much less is shining civility sincere sanctity. The Jews, who obeyed some of God's laws, because they lived in the wilful breach of others, are said to have done nothing of all his commands: Jer. xxxii. 23, 'And they came in and possessed it,' *i.e.*, the land of Canaan, 'but they obeyed not thy voice, nor walked in thy law: they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do.' It seems strange that the indictment should run so high, as to accuse them of the breach of every law, and the neglect of every positive precept. Surely the Jews offered sacrifice, circumcised their children, kept the passover, observed their new moons and Sabbaths, and did many things which God commanded them to do, and yet here they are charged to do nothing that God commanded them to do. Truly, because they had not a conscientious eye to every known duty, but allowed themselves in the omission of some, God reckons that they obeyed him in none, and deals with them as if they had done nothing of all that he commanded them. Now, reader, if they who perform some positive duties are counted by God as performing none, if they wilfully neglect any, what a pitiful nothing will God reckon thy religion, if it be wholly negative, without any positive obedience at all. Though brass coin be not so bad as leathern, yet, not being so good as silver, it is little accounted. Though thou art not as bad as the scandalous, yet if thou art not as good as the truly pious, God will not esteem thee; for what is highly esteemed of men may be an abomination in the sight of God.

Reader, weigh this argument; wouldst thou lose all the pains thou takest to forbear what is evil? Art thou contented to work all thy days at the labour-in-vain? Canst thou be satisfied that thy negative religion should be counted at the great day a nullity, or no religion at all? Little dost thou think how deep it will cut thy heart to find thy civility judged by God himself to be but varnished heathenism, or glistering impiety. The young man who was more than a mere negative Christian, thought his condition safe and sound; but when Christ discovered him insincere, he went away as heavily as he came to him hastily. Probably thy hopes are great; but I must tell thee, thy disappointment will be the more grievous when thou shalt find thyself deceived, and that thou hast all thy life long been a laborious loiterer, and done nothing. The greater rise thine expectation had, and the higher thy hope was, the more bruising will thy fall be, and the heavier thy heart for ever.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Arguments against omissions. God deserves our positive obedience before all others, and true sanctification cannot be without it.

7. Consider, God deserves your positive obedience as well as your negative. Friend, if God hath thy negative obedience, some other hath thy positive,—for I cannot suppose thee idle all the time of thy life,—either the devil, or the world, or the flesh; man cannot live without a master, whose work and business he will do. Now let thy conscience judge which of these deserves thy service best. If, as Alexander said, when asked, of his kingdoms, who should inherit them after his death, Let them be given to the most worthy, thou wilt for the future give thy affections and conversation to the most worthy; I doubt not but thou wilt quickly give them to God. For the devil, surely thou wilt not for shame put him in composition with God. Is not he an old serpent, solicitous night and day with his wiles, and snares, and devices to deceive thee? And is not he a roaring lion, seeking continually how he may devour thee? 2 Cor. xi. 3; Eph. vi. 11; Rev. xii. 9; 1 Pet. v. 8. Is not his enmity such against God, that he hates thee for his sake, and improves all his power and policy to bring thee to be a partaker of the same misery and wretchedness with himself? And is he fit to be thy master? Art thou willing to be his servant? Yet I must tell thee, if thou wilfully neglectest the work of God, thou art of thy father the devil, if the devil and his works thou dost, John viii. 44. And remember, the Redeemer had not died to subdue the devil to us, if it had not been cruel bondage for man to be enslaved to him, Heb. ii.

For the world, what is in it that should deserve thy service? I am sure God made the world for thee, and not thee for the world; and the end is more excellent than the means. God made the world to serve thee, and not thee to serve the world. Is it riches that thou payest thy homage to? Ah, how infinitely inferior are they to thy spiritual soul! Is it not a rare lovely sight to see a noble, heaven-born immortal spirit truckle, and bow, and submit, and be a drudge and slave to white and yellow dust, to the guts and garbage of the earth? Is not this a fine sight, thinkest thou, for thy love and desires, and joys and delights, like moles to be grovelling in the earth, when high and noble objects worthy of them are always before thee expecting them?

Or is it the honour of the world which thou adorest? Dost thou know what an idol thou hast set up in thine heart?—a vapour, a wind, the stinking breath of a company of ignorant, vile people, who understand nothing of true worth or excellency. Where is this? or what is this god whom thou worshippest? a fashion, *σχῆμα τοῦ κοσμοῦ*, 1 Cor. vii. 31; a mathematical figure, somewhat in show, nothing in substance; *φαντασία*, a fancy, Acts xxv. 23, that hath an existence in the brain, but nowhere else. It is as an echo to the ear, which is a voice, a buzz, a hum, and no more. It is as a picture to the eye, which hath some shape, but no life. In brief, honour of the world is so poor, so pitiful, so inconsiderable a thing, that a wise man would not give a farthing for it.

Or is it pleasure, that bewitching bait, that sugared poison, which hath caught and killed many? Thou knowest not what thou dost, when, as the apostle saith, 'Thou servest divers lusts and pleasures,' Tit. iii. 2, 3, reckoning it as the misery of man by nature. What is this pleasure, but the satisfaction of thy senses, and the delight thou hast therein, which the beasts may enjoy above thee? Let conscience judge, are brutish pleasures worthy to domineer and bear sway over a mind that is large enough to grasp both worlds, and a heart capable of the joys and pleasures of glorious and blessed angels? Reader, if the world were worthy to be thy master, or its treasures, or honours, or pleasures, did deserve thy service, the Redeemer might have spared his pains and passion, when he gave himself to [deliver you from] this present evil world, Gal. i. 4.

Or is it the flesh thou art so fond of? Why, that is but a poor piece; it is deceitful, and will cozen thee, Jer. xvii. 9; it hath such a depth of deceit in it, that neither thou nor any other creature can fathom it. And is it good to be a servant to so treacherous a master? It is dying, and will forsake thee, Ps. lxxiii. 25. It must shortly be laid in the dust, become food for worms; nay, be turned into dust. And canst thou think this clod of clay, this lump of earth, this sink of filthiness, this receptacle of crawling vermin, a fit master to rule over a soul that is of celestial extraction, of a spiritual angelical nature, and of an eternal duration? Surely, reader, thou art no debtor to the flesh, to live after the flesh, Rom. viii. 12. Thou owest thy flesh nothing but care and watchfulness to keep it under, and to subdue it, that it lord it not over thy spirit. If thou servest the flesh once, thou servest it too much by once; for thou art no debtor to it, and dost not owe it the least service imaginable, but in subordination to thy soul and Saviour. Surely then, if neither the devil, nor the world, nor the flesh deserve thy

positive obedience, God must. Reader, let me come up a little closer to thee; I pray, who hath laid most obligations on thee, God or they? To whom art thou most indebted, to God or to them? Did they give thee thy being when thou wast nothing? Did they form thee and fashion thee in thy mother's womb? Was it by them that thou wast born? Did they look after thee in thine infancy, and cause mercy all along to grow up with thee? Have any of them protected thee in thy dangers, supported thee in thy difficulties, supplied thee in thy wants, or delivered thee out of thy distresses? Who spreads thy table, and blesseth thy food to thee every day? Who makes thy bed, and commandeth sleep for thee every night? Whose mercy is it thou livest, God's or theirs, and through whose compassion is it that thou art not consumed? Whose visitation is it that preserveth thy spirit? Who defendeth thee night and day from devils and damned spirits, who watch continually to drag thee to their own den and dungeon of darkness? and who hath relieved thee with all the mercies which ever thou hast enjoyed? And is all this nothing to engage thee to his service? Doth all this care of thee deserve nothing from thee again to God? But, friend, to come up one step nearer to thee. Did God, or any of them, send his only begotten Son to redeem thee out of the hands of the law and divine justice, and to purchase for thee a state of peace, and love, and adoption, and everlasting life? Did they, or any of them, bear the curse of the law, and the wrath of an infinite majesty, and the rage of the fiends of darkness, to deliver thee from them, and to make thee blessed? O reader, where are thy wits? What is become of thine understanding? If he that sends thee in all the good thou enjoyest, and freeth thee from all the evil thou escapest, doth not deserve all thou hast and art, who doth I know not. Hast thou laid the thousandth part of those obligations on any child or servant thou hast, which God hath on thee? Didst thou make them? Dost thou preserve them? Canst thou redeem them? Alas! thou art but a poor instrument in the hand of God, to convey some small matters to them; yet thou expectest positive as well as negative obedience from them; and why should not God, who hath laid such millions of obligations on thee, look for the like from thee? Once more, to whom wilt thou call in thy day of distress? to whom wilt thou cry in thy time of trouble? to God, or any of those three fore-mentioned masters? Is it to them, or to God, that thou wilt lift up thy hands, and eyes, and heart on thy sick, on thy dying bed, when all thy friends and kindred will be insignificant and helpless to thee, and devils will

wait on thee to devour thee? Who is it that offereth thee an unchangeable state of pleasure and happiness upon excellent and equitable terms, that entreats, and invites, and wooeth, and courteth thee to accept of freedom from misery, and hell flames, and eternal damnation; and also to embrace his tenders of fulness of joy, and a crown of life, and a kingdom of glory for ever and ever? Ah friend, little dost thou know how much thou owest the blessed God. I am sure thou canst not deny him any part of thy heart or life; if thou wilt give him what he deserves, thy conscience must tell thee that it is his due. And then if thou wilt give every one his due, why shouldst thou put by the glorious Lord? If thy friends, thy neighbours, thine enemies, all must have their due, I beseech thee do not deny God, but let him have thy positive obedience, which is unquestionably his due.

8. Consider, sanctification, repentance, or sound, saving conversion, consisteth in positive as well as negative holiness; nay, more especially and principally in positive holiness, as that which consummateth and perfecteth the work. And how then canst thou have any grounded hope that thy condition is safe without it? When the prophet mentions that repentance which is never to be repented of, that repentance which shall find mercy and obtain pardon, Isa. lv. 7, he enjoineth both an aversion from sin, and a conversion to God, as their supreme and chiefest good. When the apostle mentions that sanctification, which is the inseparable concomitant of justification, and the constant effect of our union with Christ, he mentions both: 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, (freed from its laws, as a dead wife from the laws of her husband, and disabled unto its service, as a dead man is unto the actions of life; here is negative holiness,) but alive unto God, (obliged unto the laws of his sovereign, and enabled unto his service, as a living man is unto actions that are suitable to life; here is positive holiness,) through Christ.' This is the root upon which sanctification groweth as the fruit, Rom. vi. 11. So ver. 18, 'Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.' Being delivered from the former usurper, they became obedient to their rightful Lord, and served him.

Now, friend, what wilt thou do for an evidence of repentance and sanctification, which are of such absolute necessity that thou canst not be saved without them, Luke xiii. 3; Heb. xii. 14, if thou neglectest positive godliness? Indeed thou mayest flatter thyself with a hypocritical repentance, but a sincere one respects both parts of the law. A Hebrician observes that in the word

tamim, which signifieth upright or perfect, there is a great *tau*, to note that an upright man observeth the whole law from the first to the last letter thereof. He may be too critical, but this is certain, the true penitent chooseth the way of obedience, as well as refuseth the way of disobedience. He is described by this character: 'He chooseth the things that please God,' Isa. lvi. 4. He doth not only refuse the things that displease God, but also choose the things that please him; yea, and because they please him. The natural votary is what he is, from the good temperament of his body, which makes him more gentle and pliable than otherwise he would be. The moral religionist is what he is, from the improvement, or rather misimprovement, of his natural reason. The civilian is what he is from fear of man, or out of respect to man: 'He is still in the bond of iniquity;' but he is so careful to line his fetters, that they do not clink to the disturbance of others, or to his own shame. But the true Christian is what he is from conscience of, and love to, the will of God; and as he at his first implantation into Christ brings forth this good fruit, so he continueth in it to the end of his life: 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit,' John xv. 5.

As naturalists observe of the bees, that they are laborious in their youth, and do not dispense with themselves to be idle in their age; but as they increase in dexterousness, so also in laboriousness, being more early at work than the younger; nay, when their bodies are over-spent, and their wings ragged, they will venture abroad to work, though they often prove too weak to return home; thus the right convert flourisheth as the palm-tree in his youth: 'And is fat and flourishing, and brings forth fruit in his old age,' Ps. xcii. 12–14.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

If God should omit his care of us a moment we are undone. And if Christ had omitted the least in our work of redemption, we had been lost irrecoverably.

9. Consider, if God should omit his care of thee, and neglect thee as often as thou omittest his service, and neglectest him; nay, if he should withdraw his positive providence from thee one moment, what would become of thee? Thy body would be turned into a dead loathsome carcase, and thy soul would be haled by devils to hell-fire. Is it not more just that God should neglect

thee, than that thou shouldst neglect him? And hath he not much more reason to neglect thee a moment, than thou hast to neglect him days, and months, and years? He hath no obligation to thee, thou hast thousands to him. All he doth for thee is mercy, mere mercy; not only beyond, but contrary to merit. All he requireth of thee, and all thou canst do for him, is duty, and that which the greatest justice calls upon thee for. Now, if thou art unwilling to be neglected by God, why shouldst thou not be as unwilling to neglect God? Is thy safety of greater concern than his glory, or must thy pleasures be preferred before his? Wilt thou not make that golden rule of Christ the rule of thy actions with men, to deal with them as thou wouldst have them to deal with thee; and wilt thou deal otherwise with the blessed God? Must he remember thee at all times, in all conditions—keep thee night and day, lest any hurt thee, support and supply thee every moment, and thou forget him days without number? Is this fair or honest dealing?

Reader, let me tell thee, upon him thou livest, by him thou movest, and from him thou hast thy being. Thou canst not think, or speak, or act in the least, if he should suspend his care of thee; thine eyes could not see, nor thine ears hear, nor thy mouth taste, nor thy hands or feet move, if his providence doth not concur to them. If he should but withdraw his manutenancy, and the hold he hath of thee, for the smallest pittance of time, thou wouldst drop into the bottomless pit. The flames do not depend more on the fire, nor the streams on the spring of water, than thy life, and all thy comforts for this and the other world, do upon God; and wilt thou provoke him to leave thee? He hath said, 'With the froward he will shew himself froward,' Ps. xviii. 26; that he will walk contrary to them that walk contrary to him, Lev. xxvi. 24; and that he will forsake them that forsake him, and pay men in their own coin; and wilt thou venture him any longer? 2 Chron. xv. 2. Others have felt the truth of those threatenings, and dost thou think to go unpunished? Surely if common ingenuity will not move thee to remember him night and day, who remembereth thee with loving-kindness every minute, yet the divine severity may fright thee from forgetting him, lest he forget thee for ever. Believe it, if he leave thee, wrath, and death, and hell, and damnation, and devils, will soon find thee. Thou canst now depart from him, by thy neglect of his worship, and be merry and cheerful notwithstanding; but if once he depart from thee, though but for a moment, thou art undone eternally: 'Woe be to thee when I depart

from you,' Hosea ix. 12. Thy friends, and relations, and creature comforts may depart from thee, and it may be well with thee; but if the fountain of thy life, the God of thy health, the Father of all mercies depart from thee, woe will be to thee. Heaven and earth cannot make him blessed, or hinder him from being extremely cursed, whom God leaves and forsakes. Alas! if the heavens omit to give us its showers, or the sun omit to dispense its influences, or the earth omit to yield its increase, where are we? What can we do? How lamentable is our condition! Those persons that were purer than snow, that were whiter than milk, that were more ruddy than rubies, or than polished sapphires, their visage is blacker than a coal: 'They are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones, it is withered, it is become like a stick,' Lam. iv. 7, 8. The children and the sucklings swoon in the streets, Lam. ii. 11, 12. But if our case be so woeful, when creatures omit their accustomed kindness to us, what will it be if God should omit his care of us?

10. Consider, if the Lord Jesus Christ should omit the least in the work of thy redemption, thou wouldst be undone for ever. Had Christ been as unwilling to save thee to the uttermost, as thou art to serve him to the uttermost, what would have become of thee? Friend, Jesus Christ trod the whole wine-press of his Father's wrath alone; had he left but one drop of that bitter cup of divine wrath for thee to drink, it would have caused thy belly to swell, and bowels to be troubled, and bones to ache, and whole body and soul to suffer extremity of torments for ever. When Christ undertook to interpose between thee and his Father, to stand as a screen between thy poor soul and a consuming fire, he omitted not the least that was requisite for thy good. Though it was hard work, painful work, amazing work, such work as neither men nor angels durst undertake, yet when thy miseries and necessities required it, he did it. He did not omit to contend with earth, and heaven, and hell for thee. He did not omit to drink of the brook in the way, of the cup of his Father's wrath, and to tread the wine-press of his anger alone, that he might obtain favour and life for thee. He omitted not the least in point of satisfaction to his Father's justice; he desired not the smallest abatement of those vast sums which thou didst owe to the divine majesty, but paid the utmost farthing for thee. He never gave over till all was finished, till all the types were verified, all the promises accomplished, and all the demands of his Father fully answered, John xix. 28. He omitted nothing in point of application of the purchase which he had bought for sinners. As he died to make satisfaction

for us, so he ever liveth to make intercession for us. As he died to make his will good, for a will is not of force as long as the testator liveth, Heb. ix. 17, wherein he gives pardon, and love, and life to his people, so he liveth to see his will made good, that his chosen might enjoy whatsoever his boundless love and grace had bequeathed to them. He died, that he might be a legal testator; and he liveth, that he might be his own executor.

Now, reader, did Christ omit nothing which related to thy salvation, and wilt thou omit anything that relates to his service? Did he not shrink back when thy miseries called him to bear that burden which made the earth to quake, the whole creation to groan, and would have broke the backs of angels and archangels, and all the heavenly host, if they had put their shoulders under it; and wilt thou shrink back from that easy yoke and light burden which he calls thee to take upon thee? Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why dost thou use him thus? as Absalom said to Hushai. Is this thy gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ? why dost thou serve him so? 2 Sam. xvi. 17.

When the most righteous God demanded full satisfaction for the breach of his law, by the nature that had transgressed it, and resolved, that if he had it not, the whole posterity of Adam should perish; when his wrath was breaking in like a flood to overwhelm the whole world of mankind, and neither man nor angel durst stand in the breach to divert this deluge of fury, when the knife of the law's curse was even at the creature's throat, as Abraham's at the throat of Isaac, thy Redeemer called to his Father, O Father, Father, hold thine hand, slay not those poor creatures; I have provided a sacrifice such as thou wilt accept. I know that beeves, and goats, and lambs are not the sacrifices for sin which thou wouldst have—what proportion hath the blood of beasts to the infinite demerit of sin?—but I know what sacrifice thou wouldst have; thou wouldst have me to offer myself upon the cross as a sacrifice to thy justice, that the whole world might know the holiness of thy nature, the righteousness of thy law, and thine infinite kindness to thine elect. Well, I come to do thy will, O God. Though the task be so great, and the work so grievous, that no other dares so much as touch it, and though I am wholly free, and none can oblige or compel me to it, yet I will undertake it. Now, reader, was Christ so forward, so willing to obey such a command of dying a cursed, painful, shameful death, that he tells his Father, 'I delight to do thy will, O God;' and art thou so backward to obey his commands, and to walk in his ways, when 'his ways are ways

of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace'? Ps. xl. 6; Heb. x. 5, Prov. iii. 17. Was Christ so careful and tender of thee, that he would not omit anything needful for thy good, and art thou so careless and forgetful of him, as to omit that which is of such concernment to his glory? Friend, bethink thyself, doth not thy Redeemer deserve fairer dealings at thy hands? Heathens and publicans would not be so base and unworthy to their friends and benefactors.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Arguments against sins of omission. The new nature in believers inclines them to positive as well as negative holiness, and the profit will answer the pains.

11. Consider, if thou art a believer, thy predominant new nature inclines thee to positive as well as negative holiness. And shall this be given thee in vain? shall God be at such cost and charge as to infuse a principle of life into thee to no purpose? Pray, observe what end God hath in this regenerating work: 'Of his own will begat he us again by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures,' James i. 18. Where we have the causes of regeneration: 1. The efficient principle, He; 2. The moving, His alone will; 3. The formal, Begat us again; 4. The instrumental, The word of truth; 5. The final, That we should be a kind of first-fruits. God begets us again, that we should be devoted to him; as the first-fruits of all the sheaves were consecrated to God, and that out of thankfulness to him for his innumerable blessings, Prov. iii. 9; Rom. xii. 1. The first-fruits were holy to the Lord, and so should all Christians be. Again, he tells us his design in giving a new spirit, and putting his Spirit into them, 'That they may walk in his statutes, and do them,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. So that it is sacrilege and God-robbery for a Christian to employ himself to the use of any but God, because he is devoted to God; and it is also below a Christian, as for a man to live as doth a beast, for him that hath a noble divine principle to live as other men. As all the children of the first Adam derive from him a depraved nature, which inclines them not only to omit what is good, but also to do what is evil, therefore his seed are known by both those signs, Ps. xxxvi. 3, 4; Hosea iv. 1–3. So all the children of the second Adam derive from him a renewed nature—'For they are made partakers of the divine nature,' 2 Pet. i. 4—which doth not only take them off from what is evil, but also

put them forward to that which is good, Rom. vi. 11. As the branches derive from the root that sap and moisture which enableth them to fruitfulness, so the Christian draweth that virtue from Christ, even in his first conversion, that inclines him whilst he lives to bring forth fruit to God: Eph. ii. 10, 'We are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works, which God hath ordained that we should walk in them.' Mark, this new piece, that is indeed God's masterpiece, for the new creation doth far excel the old heavens and earth, is formed in Christ as the efficient cause unto good works, unto such works as flow from the Spirit of God as the principle, as are according to the will of God, as the rule, and for the glory of God as the end, Gal. v. 20, and vi. 16; Phil. i. 11.

Each convert hath communion with Christ in his death, and also in his life; he knoweth Christ, and hath fellowship with him in his death, whereby he dieth to sin, hence he is said to be dead and buried with Christ: Rom. vi. 6, 'Knowing this, that our old man (so sin is called, because it is nigh as old as man, is full of subtlety and craft, and should be always decaying and dying,) is crucified with him, (*i.e.*, Christ whom sin crucified, and whose death crucifieth sin,) that the body of sin (sin is said to have a body, because it consisteth of many members, Col. iii. 5) might be destroyed, (for as the life of sin gave Christ his death's-wound, so the death of Christ gave sin its death's-wound,) that henceforth we should not (willingly, cheerfully, customarily) serve sin as our lord and master.' And as the convert hath fellowship with Christ in his death, so also in his resurrection: 'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,' Phil. iii. 10—*i.e.*, have experience, for it is such a knowledge he speaks of, of the power and energy of the life of Christ, to quicken me unto new obedience.

Besides, the true convert hath the law of God written in his heart, which cannot but move him to the observation of the law in his life, Ps. xxxvii.; Heb. viii. According to the predominant principles that are in every man's nature, such are his inclinations, whether to God or evil, and such are ordinarily his practices; as a bowl moves this way or that way, according as the bias inclines.

Now, reader, consider, either thou art a believer or not. If thou art not, it concerns thee speedily to look about thee, lest thou die in this estate, and be damned for ever, John iii. 36. If thou art a believer, it would be very strange for thee to continue in any omission, for all this while thou actest against thy nature. It is very much easier to sin with thy nature than against it. A wicked man

that hath knowledge cannot sin with such pleasure and easiness as another, because he doth in sinning oppose and fight with conscience within him; but it seems harder for thee, for thou dost not only offer violence to thine enlightened conscience, but also to the new nature that is implanted in thee. By thy omissions, thou dost not only sin against thy natural light, but also against thy new spiritual life. It is hard, we say, for a man to thwart or cross nature, *naturam expellas furca*, &c., and wilt thou take such pains to disobey thy God's precepts? The devil's servants do his will, but it is with their own whole wills, according to their own inclinations; they do not cross themselves to please him. But thou canst not neglect the will of God, but it must be in part against thine own will, and against thine own inclinations; and wilt thou displease thyself to displease God, and walk contrary to thyself, that thou mayest walk contrary to God? This is the part and guise of the most spiteful, envious, and malicious enemies, and I am sure it is impossible for thee, if a believer, to be such an enemy to God. God did purposely indue thee with a new spirit, that thou mightest live to his praise: Isa. xliii. 21, 'This people have I formed for myself, and (new made and moulded them) they shall shew forth my praise.' Now, how is the praise of God spread in the world, but by good works: Mat. v. 16, 'Let your light so shine before others, that they seeing your good works may glorify your heavenly Father;' so John xv. 8.

Again, it would be marvellous if thou shouldst not follow thy own natural propensity and inclinations. For a dead man to lie still, and not stir, nor perform any actions of life, is nothing strange, —none expecteth any other; but for a living man, one that hath a principle of life, to do so, would be accounted little less than miraculous. For a man dead in sins and trespasses, that hath no spirit of grace to enliven his poor soul, to lie still in his idleness, and slothfulness, and carnal security, and to neglect the performance of the duties of a spiritual life, is no wonder; but is it not a wonder for one that is quickened in Christ, Eph. ii. 5, created unto good works, fitted and formed for them, Eph. ii. 10, that hath Jesus Christ living in him, Gal. ii. 20, and a principle of holiness inclining and enabling him hereunto, should omit those actions that are proper to life. I beseech thee, friend, do not displease thyself, and cross thy very nature, to disobey thy God; surely he is worthy of more dutiful behaviour from thee.

12. The reward will answer the work, and the profit of positive holiness will answer all thy pains. I confess obedience to the

affirmative part of the command, to pray, and hear, and give to the poor, &c., with those qualifications, and in that manner which God commandeth, is much harder than to the negative; and to do good is much more difficult than not to do evil; but thy labour shall not be in vain. I have told thee already, all the reward of a mere negative holiness is a cooler hell; but I must tell thee now, that the reward of positive holiness will be a glorious, and blessed, and endless state of happiness in heaven. A negative holiness shall not have so much as a full negative happiness; it shall not abolish, only abate the torments of hell; and the reason is, because such holiness is counterfeit and hypocritical. But positive holiness shall have both, a full negative and positive happiness. God will do him good that is good, and doth good, Ps. cxxv. 4; and if God undertake to do good to a person, he will do it to good purpose. Man's doing good, which is his positive holiness, is little; yea, nothing to God. 'My goodness extendeth not to thee,' saith David, Ps. xvi. 2. But God's doing good, which is his positive bounty, is effectual, yea, all in all with man; therefore when he would speak in few words the great kindness he had in store for his people, he only tells them, Jer. xxxii. 40, 'I will not turn away from them to do them good;' and ver. 41, 'I will rejoice over them to do them good.' Nay, though negative godliness obtains only at present some respect from men, and hereafter fewer stripes from hell's jailer, positive holiness hath a far greater, and another manner of reward, both here and hereafter: 'In the doing of thy commands there is great reward,' Ps. xix. In the forbearing thy prohibitions there is some reward, but in the doing thy commands there is great reward. Positive holiness hath meat in its mouth, affirmative obedience is its own recompense. It brings that calmness and serenity of mind that nothing else can do. Negative holiness may do somewhat towards a negative quietness, *i.e.*, a freedom from those dreadful horrors and terrors which sometimes seize those who commit gross unnatural sins; but positive piety brings positive peace. 'Great peace have they which love thy law,' Ps. cxix. 165, 'and nothing shall offend them.' They are not only freed from those gripes of conscience with which many others are afflicted, but they have that spiritual joy and heart-comfort which the world is a stranger to, Gal. vi. 16. Faith, which is not the least part of this holiness, fills the soul with joy; yea, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, Rom xv.; 1 Pet. i. 8. I may appeal to the experience of a Christian, whether ever he find more comfort than when he hath done his God faithful service, and whether ever their hearts are

more heavy than when they have been negligent of their duty. David and the Israelites were almost transported, their hearts leaped for joy, that they had offered so willingly and liberally towards the building of the temple: 'Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy;' and the wine of their joy was so strong that he was forced to give it vent: 'Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever,' &c., 1 Chron. xxix. 9–12, &c. But mark, God is so tender of this man that mindeth his duty, that he will suffer no wind, no ill wind to blow upon him: 'Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' None must knock at their door to disturb them of their rest. All the creatures must be kind to them for his sake; they must have nothing done to them which may be offensive.

Yet this is not all the profit of holiness here, (though I shall pass to the next,) much less in the other world. As I said before, a positive holiness shall have a positive heaven. The Christian's avoiding what is evil, through the blood of Christ, shall be recompensed with a freedom from hell; and the Christian's doing what is good, through the same meritorious cause, shall be rewarded with the fruition of heaven. The two servants that had not hid their talents in a napkin, as the negative Christian doth, but traded according to his trust, and improved his stock faithfully in doing good, as he had opportunity, is commended by his master for a good and faithful servant, and honoured with his master's own happiness: 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' No less will content his large liberal heart than his own joy for his holy ones, a joy so great that it cannot enter into them, their narrow vessels can never hold such an ocean, therefore they must enter into it, and be immersed and swallowed up as it were in this vast sea of pleasure and solace. But, reader, consider in this chapter before the text, ver. 34. What will be the profit of this sort of piety? how infinitely the gains will exceed the pains, were they ten thousand times more than they can be: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat,' &c. How doth every word speak love and life, every syllable drop myrrh and mercy, in which we may observe the welcome those that are fruitful Christians shall find from Christ in the other world. We have, 1. The estate they shall be invested with, and that is a kingdom. 2. Their title to it,

and that is by inheritance from their Father: 'Ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.' 3. Its preparation for them: 'Prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' 4. Their formal introduction into it: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' 5. The qualification of the persons that shall inherit this kingdom—'I was hungry, and ye fed me'—such as feed the hungry and clothe the naked. 1. Observe, reader, for thine encouragement, to mind positive holiness, the estate thy loving and bountiful Father hath provided for thee, when thou comest to age. It is no less than a kingdom; thou shalt be a king now, and enjoy a kingdom then: 'He hath made us kings and priests unto God,' Rev. i. 6, with palms in thy hand, Rev. vii. 9, of which the door of the Holy of holies was made, 1 Kings vi. 33, an emblem of perfect victory over all thine enemies, and robes on thy back, Rev. xix. 8, of perfect purity, spotless innocency, and meridian glory, and a crown on thy head, James i. 12, such a crown as will never wear, never waste, but endure, and therefore called incorruptible, 1 Cor. ix. 25, and rêign with Christ for ever and ever. Reader, hath a kingdom nothing of amiableness in it to allure thee? What fighting, and killing, and swearing, and forswearing is there for an earthly kingdom! Oh what shouldst thou not do for a heavenly kingdom! Where, (1.) Is the greatest glory, a far more exceeding weight of it, 2 Cor. v. 17, 18. (2.) The strongest security, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, Heb. xi. No devil or subtle serpent can crawl into the celestial paradise. (3.) The brightest splendour, transparent as crystal, Rev. xxi., wherein the inhabitants shall shine as the sun, and much more lustrously, Mat. xiii. (4.) The highest attendants, cherubims and seraphims standing as servants or porters at the twelve gates of the city, Rev. xxi. 12. (5.) The greatest power, the saints shall inherit all things, Rev. xii.; judge that world which now censureth and judgeth them, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. And (6.) The most pure and perfect satisfaction; in every power and part of soul and body, there is fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasures, and (7.) eternity to complete their felicity: 2 Pet. i. 11, 'So an entrance shall be administered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2. The title, Inherit the kingdom. It comes to them not by their purchase, but by Christ's purchase; therefore called the purchased possession: Eph. i. 14, 'Until the redemption of the purchased possession.' It comes not to them by their goodness, but by God's gift. 'Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom,' Luke xii. 32. It comes not to them by their obedience, but by inheritance from their Father.

Christ is God's natural son and heir of all things; by him believers are God's adopted children: Gal. iii. 26, 'Ye are all the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.' 'And if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,' Rom. viii. 17.

3. Its preparation for them from the foundation of the world. When God first erected the stately fabric of heaven and earth, probably he made the empyrean heaven the place of the blessed; for at first, when he laid the foundations of the world, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy; therefore it is likely the place of their residence was made. Besides, it was prepared in the decrees of God; they were destinated to a diadem before they had a being.

4. Their formal admission into it: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father.' Come from all sin, from all sorrow, all sufferings; come from Babylon to Sion, from a barren wilderness, where is no water for a thirsty soul, to a fruitful, pleasant paradise, where are all sorts of luscious and heart-cheering rarities. Come, where have ye been all this while? how could ye bear my absence so long? what have ye done in a valley of tears, a Bochim, a place of weeping, so many years? When he calls them to die, his voice need not be unpleasant to them. He doth but call them as a father his child, out of the shower into his house: 'Come, my people, enter into the chambers; shut the door, hide yourselves for a very little moment, till the indignation be overpast,' Isa. xxvi. 20. Come, child, go to bed; I will cause the dust to be a soft couch of repose to thee, and when thou awakest in the morning of the resurrection all shall be well with thee. But his voice at the resurrection will be sweet indeed: Come, child, oh come, dear child, into my arms and embraces; come into my heart, come into my very soul; come and take possession of my dear-bought purchase: 'Come and inherit the kingdom prepared for thee.' Come, child, and enjoy all that honour, and treasure, and joy, and delight, and happiness, which thou hast so often prayed, and wept, and watched, and sighed, and sobbed for. Come, child, to thy Father's house, sit down at his table, drink of his new wine, and eat of his hidden manna, and feast of the tree of life, that groweth in the midst of paradise, for ever and ever.

5. The qualifications of the persons that shall partake of this possession; they are such as feed the hungry, clothe the naked, &c.: 'For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink.' Reader, dost thou not observe, that those who mind this positive holiness are the blessed of the Father, and the heirs of the kingdom, and wilt thou neglect? A kingdom makes

the greatest difference among men. The height of any one's ambition can be but a kingdom; and will not a glorious, joyful, eternal kingdom move thee?

CHAPTER XL.

Arguments against sins of omission. God delights chiefly in our doing good; and our opportunities for doing good will quickly be gone.

13. Consider, God takes most pleasure in our positive holiness. It is true he is pleased to see men deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; but nothing to that pleasure which he takes in seeing them live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present evil world. He likes ceasing from evil, because it is agreeable to his word; but he likes better doing of good, because it is more conformable to his will: Isa. lxiv. 5, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.' Thou meetest him with the riches of mercy, who worketh what is good with alacrity. If he come to thee, thou wilt not cast him away; nay, thou wilt run to meet him, and embrace him. As the father of the prodigal ran to meet his returning son, Luke xv., and as one at odds, but willing to be reconciled, tells us, he will meet his opposite half-way. And I may say of God's meeting a soul that worketh righteousness, as God tells Moses, 'Behold, Aaron thy brother comes to meet thee; and when he seeth thee, he will be glad at his heart.' Behold, thy God and Father cometh to meet thee, and when he seeth thee working righteousness, he will be glad at his heart; nay, so glad, that the disadvantage of a man's country shall not hinder him of this kindness: Acts x., 'And Peter said, I perceive now that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.' God proclaimeth to all the world that he delighteth in such a man's way, Ps. lxxiii. 23, and therefore his word, which he hath given us for our rule herein, is called his good and acceptable will, Rom. xii. 2; and the reason is, because such persons are most like God, therefore they have most of his love and delight. God is a pure act, and so cannot but approve of them that are active. He is ever at work: John v. 17, 'Hitherto my Father worketh, and I work.' And it is righteousness he is always working: 'The Lord is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works,' Ps. cxlv. He is good, and doth good; so that those who are positively holy do most resemble

him, and so do most delight him. We all take most pleasure in those children that are our exactest pictures. Reader, art thou negatively holy? canst thou say, I am no drunkard, no glutton, no adulterer? thou mayest say this, and be like the devil, for the devil himself may say as much. Canst thou say, I am no thief, no swearer, no blasphemer, no Sabbath-breaker, no trader with false weights or false measures, no bearer of false witness against my neighbour? A beast may say as much, and thou mayest be free from these sins, and yet like a beast. But if thou livest in the love and delight of the blessed Majesty, doing his pleasure, this is to be like an angel, Ps. ciii.; and doing good to others, this is to be like God, and this is that which takes his heart. Common humanity is much affected with one that aboundeth in goodness, and is rich in good works; therefore the apostle tells us, 'That for a good man possibly some may even dare to die,' Rom. v., the reason of which is, because the people of the Jews were divided into three sorts of persons: there were *Reshagnim*, or οἱ ἀσεβεῖς, the wicked or ungodly, those who lived without the worship of God, and walked in profane courses; there were also *Tsidikim*, or οἱ δικαῖοι, the just or righteous, men of rigid righteousness, or severe innocency; and *Chasidim*, or οἱ ἀγαθοι, the good and liberal, men of large hearts and open hands, to do good to others, who, as public conduits, are of public advantage in the places where they live. Now, saith the apostle, scarcely for a righteous man, that is, for a man of austere justice, will one die; but for a good man, a man full of good works, one that is bountiful to others, and useful in his generation, a man would even dare to die. Humanity is so taken with doing good, that a man can be contented almost to die for such; much more must goodness itself, and the fountain of all goodness, be affected therewith. He tells us, that he is a God who executeth kindness, judgment, and righteousness: 'for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;' both in doing them myself, and seeing them done by others, Ps. xi. 7; Micah vi. 8.

What thinkest thou, reader, of this motive to good works? wouldst thou not delight the heart of God? How long hast thou by thy omissions grieved him, and is it not yet time to rejoice him? How often hast thou displeased him, how many millions of times, and wilt thou not please him? Thou daily seest, that though he hath no obligations to his creatures, but the contrary, he doth them good, and gives them food and fruitful seasons, and fills their heart with gladness. And wilt thou not do thy utmost to glad his heart, who hath above all apprehensions obliged thee? Truly, he doth

not deserve the name of a rational creature, who doth not above all things seek to please his Maker; and there is no way hereunto like abounding in well-doing. Therefore the apostle begs for the Colossians, that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will. Why? that they might keep their light in a dark lantern, or have it as men wear a glass eye, for show, and not for use? or that men might be able to talk the more of religion, and the things that appertain thereunto? No; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρέσκειαν, to his whole liking and delight, that ye might please God. Ay, but how may this be done? He presently tells us how: 'That ye may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.' There is no such way to please God, as fruitfulness in every good work. It rejoiceth the husbandman to see his trees laden with fruit, to see his fields covered over, as the psalmist's phrase is, Ps. lxv. 13, with corn, and to see his returns answer his cost. And it rejoiceth the blessed God to see a heart that hath long lain fallow, and been barren, full of faith, and love, and humility, and heavenly mindedness, and all the fruits of righteousness; and so a life that hath been idle and unprofitable, abundant in acts of piety, charity, and the like. David, who served the will of God in his generation, he of all men was the man after God's own heart.

14. Consider, thou hast but a little time to do good in, therefore it concerns thee to set speedily upon it, and to be diligent at it. Alas! how short is thy whole life, from the womb to the tomb: 'It is but a shadow that fleeth away, and continueth not; a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away;' it is nothing, Job xiv. 2; James iv. 14; Ps. xxxix. 6. And how much of this time is gone, hath been spent as a tale that is told, impertinently, and to no purpose, in doing nothing, or in doing that which is worse than nothing, Ps. xc. 9. How short that time is that remaineth God only knoweth; for thy time is in his hand, not thine own; surely then it behoveth thee to redeem the time, to make the most of it, and whilst thou hast it, to improve it for the doing of good. O friend, hast thou loitered so long, is thy work so great, thy day to work in so short, and yet is it not time to bestir thyself? Is death at thy door? art thou within a step of eternity, within the view of the other world, and yet wilt thou not up and be doing? Can any assure thee of standing in the vineyard another year; nay, another month; nay, another day; and is it not yet time to be fruitful? Dost thou not see that as labourers are sent into the vineyard at all hours, so they go out of the vineyard

at all hours. Thou owest a debt to nature, to the God of nature; the day of payment is not expressed, therefore it may be demanded at any time. Reader, though some fruit falls from the tree by reason of its maturity, yet how much more is blown off, or cudgelled off, whilst it is green? Do not thine eyes see coffins and graves of all sorts and sizes? And wilt thou be as the silly beasts, who, though the butcher come one day to the field and fetch away one, another day and fetch away another to the slaughter, yet those that remain neither miss them that are gone, nor dread their own destinies? O friend, what dost thou think to do when time is gone, and death comes? wilt thou stop the sun of thy life in its career? will it hear thy voice, and obey thy command? Or wilt thou call to time, as Israel's general did to the sun, Stand still, that I may be avenged of all my sensuality, and idleness, and pride, and impenitency, and all my spiritual enemies, which have robbed me of God and heaven? Do you imagine time will be at your beck? Or are the apprehensions of the king of terrors, and of a dreadful day of judgment, and of an amazing eternity, no whit rousing or awakening to thee?

Canst thou believe a dark night of death a fit time to trim, and adorn, and attire thy soul in, for the love and embraces of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Now God gives thee a day, but of how many hours, whether longer or shorter, thou canst not tell. Thy life is fleeing away, time's chariot moves swiftly: 'Yet a little while the light is with thee; walk while thou hast the light, lest darkness come upon thee,' John xii. 35. Two things especially occur in these words. 1. Now thou hast time, yea, opportunity; make much of it, improve it to the utmost: 'Walk while thou hast the light.' God allots thee a due time for bringing forth; hence it is observable that God gave the fig-tree three years to bear in. Other trees, as the olive and nut tree, required more time, but so succulent a plant as the fig-tree needed no more; nay, saith A Lapide, if the fig-tree bear not the third year, it will never bear. God never expecteth brick without allowing straw, nor requires his rent before quarter-day, or the time of payment comes. 2. Thy time, or at least thine opportunity, is very short; therefore work much in a little time, whilst thou hast the light: 'Yet a little while the light is with thee; a little while, and the light will be taken from thee.' A little while, and the light of life; a little while, and the light of means, and helps, and seasons of grace, will be taken from thee. And what then? truly, then darkness will come upon thee; a dark grave will be the receptacle of thy body, and a dark

dungeon will be the receptacle of thy soul, if thou now loiterest; and darkness is no fit state, nor a dark night a fit time, to walk or work in.

Darkness is dreadful, and everything seems more frightful in the night. If a man's house be on fire in the night, that he hears the noise and rattling of the flames, seeth no way of escape for himself, his wife, and his children, oh, in what a plight is he! he stands naked in his chamber, at a loss what to do; he is full of horrors and terrors, to be conceived by none but himself. How pale is his countenance, and how heavy his heart, when he seeth the flames seizing his chamber, when they come near his body! he is almost drowned to death with grief and sorrow before he is burned to death with the flames. So it is when the night of death surpriseth the loiterer, that hath neglected the doing of good, when conscience is in a flame about his ears, and frights him with the fore-apprehensions of the unquenchable burnings, and with cutting reflections upon his former negligence and unprofitableness; the man is quaking and trembling, not knowing what to do. Is that a time to put on the armour of light, when he is putting off his natural life? Is a dark night of fear and amazement a time to seek God in, or to work out his own salvation? Ah, friend, it is too great and weighty a work to be done in an instant, and the poor sinner is too much astonished to set about it. If the fear of a danger gone and over kill a Nabal, and make his heart like a stone, what will the fear, the certain knowledge of wrath, of the wrath of a God, of the everlasting wrath of a God to come, do to a poor sinner? O friend, make use of time while thou hast it: 'Work the work of him that sent thee while it is day; for the night cometh, when no man can work,' John ix. 4.

CHAPTER XLI.

The grand cause of sins of omission, an unregenerate heart; with the cure of it, a renewed nature.

I proceed now to the second and third particulars, viz., the cause and cure of sins of omission; I shall recite one more general and principal cause, others more special, and less principal, and join the cure to the cause.

1. The grand cause of these sins of omission is an unregenerate heart. Where the ground is unploughed, and lieth fallow, no fruit can be expected; weeds may grow, good corn cannot grow

there. When the heart is not broken up by repentance, but hardened through custom and continuance in sin, no fruits of righteousness, no faith, no love, or humility, &c., can be expected there: 'Can the leopard change his spots, or the blackamore his skin? no more can he that is accustomed to do evil, learn to do well,' Jer. xxiii. 13. Nature's fruit will be according to its root, whether sweet or sour. There must of necessity be a good foundation laid, before there can be a good superstructure of holiness reared. An unrenewed heart hath no tendency towards it, and nature will work little farther than its own inclination. The water will run as the tide carrieth it. Nay, the unregenerate heart is contrary to religious duties, hath a hatred and abhorrency of them; no wonder then if it live in the omission of them. The carnal mind, Lady Reason herself, the chief and principal faculty of man, is enmity against God: 'It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' Rom. viii. 7. He who is an enemy to a man's person, will never be a friend to his precepts, much less will he who is enmity against God's life, be subject to his law. There is an impossibility hereof: 'Neither indeed can be.' Till the heart be changed, it will never like the divine commands, that are so contrary to its lusts; and till it be brought to love them, it will neglect obedience to them. When the will, the great commander, is set against the laws of God, how can any of the other faculties submit to them? As in fleshly lusts, the titillation is from sense and appetite, but the consent of the reasonable will is that which makes it a vice; so unto good, the inclination may possibly be from example or education, but the royal assent of the will is that which makes it a virtue. The devil finds it no hard work to part sin[1] and his duty, whose will never chose it, and whose heart never loved it; but it will be much easier to part him and his duty, whose will and heart have an enmity and reluctancy against it. If a lad's calling doth not suit his genius, he seldom comes to do anything well, or to be expert at it, much less when he hates it. The scholar who loves not his book, will hardly proceed from the degree of a dunce, much less he who loatheth his book. If the nature of a man be contrary to God and his ways, the presence of God is troublesome to him: Job xxi. 14, 'They say to God, Depart from us.' And the worship of God is tedious to them: 'When will the new moon be gone, and the Sabbath be over?' And the precepts of God are fetters and cords to them: Ps. ii. 3, 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' Common gifts of the Spirit, as illu-

[1] Qu. 'him'?—ED.

mination, convictions, sudden flashes of affection, may do somewhat against this distemper of nature, but the virtue of that physic is soon spent, and then it returns to its former illness. Colours not laid in oil will soon be washed off.

Indeed, how can it be expected that a body separated from a soul should stir or move; and much less can it be expected that a soul without Christ, its life, should pray, or hear, or watch, or do anything according to the will of God. Paul tells us, 'I live,' (*i.e.*, to God, according to his will, doing what is good; but how comes this about? at whose cost doth he keep house?) 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' I may thank my Lord Jesus; I am beholden unto him for all ability unto sacred actions: 'And the life that I live in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God.' It is from Christ alone that I receive supplies of strength and virtue to live to God. What will then become of the unregenerate person who is without Christ? Eph. ii. 12, 'He who hath not the Son, hath not life;' and he who hath not life, I am sure cannot live to God. The apostle fitly joins them together, 'trees without fruit, twice dead,' *i.e.*, certainly dead, or dead indeed, Jude 12. Where the stock is dead, the branches must needs wither; and if they wither, there is little likelihood of fruit.

Besides, an unregenerate soul is necessitated, as to internal omissions, in regard of his want of spiritual life, so, to external omissions, in regard of his engagements to his carnal interest. One is possibly married to profit, and when that calls him, he must go, though closet or family, or any other duties, bid him stay: Mat. viii., 'No man can serve God and mammon; but he will love the one, and hate the other; or despise the one, and cleave to the other.' When once there comes a competition between godliness and gain in the life, it will quickly appear which hath the greatest sway and predominancy in the heart. The young man would not follow Christ, because his estate denied to give him leave. Had he been less rich, he had been, probably, more religious; but having once espoused the interest of his wealth, he could not leave it, though he left God, and Christ, and heaven for it. Another is engaged to pleasures; and when they require his presence, it cannot be supposed that he will deny them for the exercises of religion, which are so painful to him. Herod may pretend fair for religion, and profess some kindness to the Baptist, but when his Delilah commands, his love to her overcomes his fear of John; and instead of doing many things, or anything that was good, he cuts off that head which had a tongue in it so bold as to reprove him for his sin. A third is wedded to

honour; and if that be inconsistent with holiness, as sometimes the case may be, he will neglect his duty to God to pay his homage to this Diana. Jehu will do one good work, because God's and his interest were both conjoined. His slaughter of Ahab's sons and prophets tended to settle him the firmer in his throne, and so his ambition called for the same with God's command. But Jehu will omit another good work; he will not destroy the idolatry at Dan and Bethel, because there his interest and God's were divided; for though God enjoined the destruction of idols in one place as well as another, yet Jehu was fearful, as his predecessor Jeroboam, that the crown would not be fast on his head if the people should have gone up to Jerusalem to worship; therefore when his carnal interest forbids what God commands, he disobeys God to serve that. There is no unsanctified person in the world but hath some worldly interest of his own, superior and paramount; nay, in many things opposite and contrary to the interest of God; and therefore, though he may obey God while both those interests can agree and walk together in the same way, yet when there is a necessity of their parting, he will cleave to that which hath the predominancy within him. Where God hath some residence, and is entertained but as an underling to the flesh, when it comes to this pass, that one must be turned out of doors, for they cannot agree long together, you may easily guess which it shall be.

The cure of this, reader, must be, if thou art not born again, to get a new heart. An old heart will never serve for, or enable unto, the acts of new obedience. The water will rise no higher than the fountain-head whence it floweth. If you would have a clock to move regularly, and the hand without to go true, you must have the wheels and poises right within. A good temperament of body may cause a propensity to some things that are honest; but that excellency must be of little worth that hath its original from man's basest part, as those materials are mean which arise out of the potentiality of the matter, and truly that honesty deserves not the name of virtue, being not quickened with the command of reason. An exact constitution may help a man to be mild, meek, courteous, modest, shame-faced; but these cannot be adopted into the family of goodness, because here, as they say in the motion of the serpent, the tail leads the way to the head; the body rules and governs the soul, and the man's perfection is from his meanest and worst part. Besides, the cause of all this seeming virtue is mutable and mortal. Age, or sickness, or change of air, or of condition, may alter a man's good nature, and then where is his religion? Truly,

as a comet, it came without giving notice, and goeth away without giving warning. The cause being taken away, the effect ceaseth.

Improved reason will do more towards religion than a sound bodily constitution; but yet the moralists, for all their reason, were far enough from being religious. Indeed, reason rightly improved, is a special help, a serviceable handmaid to religion; but as they used it, or rather abused it, it became an opposite and enemy to religion. The mind, or understanding, which is the supreme faculty of the soul, they set up in defiance of revelations, and with it they outface illumination. Ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος, the natural man, *animalis homo*, he that hath no more than a reasonable soul, 'perceiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. Natural light will not help a man to see spiritual objects, because there is no proportion between the faculty and the object; and because it cannot apprehend them, therefore it condemneth them as foolish and ridiculous. It hath its high thoughts, and carnal reasonings, and vain imaginations, in which strongholds lust shelters itself against all the convictions of our own spirit. And as the moralist deifieth his understanding in opposition to faith, so he idoliseth the liberty of his will in opposition to the special energy and virtue of the Holy Ghost. Liberty, saith the philosopher, I have by nature—that is, a freedom to choose good or evil I have in common with the rest of mankind; but goodness to that liberty, or an application of it to the choice of good rather than evil, this I have from myself, my reason, and I am beholden to myself for it. So that, as Augustine saith, if this be true, *Si nobis potest, libera voluntas ex Deo est, quoad hoc potest esse vel bona vel mala, bona vero voluntas ex nobis est; melius est id quod a nobis quam quod ab illo est*, De Peccat. Merit., lib. ii. cap. 18. If our will be free from God, it may be good or bad; but if it be good from ourselves, better is that which we have from ourselves than that which we have from God. In short, this moral votary differs from the natural, that the original of the latter's religion is the constitution of his body; of the former's, is the chief faculty of his soul; but neither of these can make a man religious; for where the vitals are tainted, and the inward parts infected, it is in vain to use plasters or outward medicines. Indeed, here is the great fault of both the former, that they take no notice of the depravation of man's nature, which alone would convince them of the necessity of a change. They who have crazed principles and cracked brains cannot see any defects in themselves, being prepossessed with an

opinion of their own perfection. Both the naturalists and the moralists are so far from knowing the plague of their own hearts, that they count everything of nature rather lovely than loathsome. And as among the Moors blackness is counted a beauty, because it is common and general, and they see no other; so with these men the vitiosity of nature, which is the seed of all evil, is commended for the spring of virtue. Indeed they are in love with their disease, and instead of health have this unhappiness, that they feel not their own sickness; so that neither the one nor the other can be religious, or perform those duties which God requireth.

Regeneration is absolutely requisite to this; he that layeth not that for his foundation, can never build a temple for God; he must needs prove a bankrupt, that is worse than nought when he begun. Some tell us that trees shoot above ground as much, and no more, than they do under ground. I am sure there is no more godliness outwardly in the life, than there is inwardly in the heart. If the fear and love of God be the great spring to set all the wheels agoing in the ways of religion, then all is right, but till then nothing is right. If there be not the oil of solid grace in the vessel of the heart, to feed profession in the lamp, and holiness in the life, both will quickly fail.

When God intends that his people should walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them, what doth he for them to prepare them and enable them thereunto? Truly this: he regenerates them, and changeth them, and putteth a new principle into them: 'I will give them a new heart and a new spirit,' Ezek. xxxvi. 26; I will cast them in the fire of my word, and though they are old, tough, untoward metal, I will melt them, and soften them, and they shall run into my mould. But how can this be? nature will still run into its old temper; though it may be a little altered in its form, yet it will still continue the same in substance and matter. No; I will put my Spirit into them, and they shall walk in my commandments, and do them. My Spirit shall renew and quite alter their spirits; it shall turn the stream of their hearts from the world and flesh unto God, and shall be in them a principle of spiritual life and motion, strengthening them to 'walk in my statutes, and to keep my commandments, and do them.' The natural spirit would have served to [have] done natural actions. The spirit of the world would have served for a man to have walked according to the course of the world, but no less than a new spirit can serve for a new life; and nothing below the Spirit of God can help unto a faithful walking with God.

Two things, reader, I would specially commend to thee, without

which thou canst never rightly obey any positive precept; and they are to make sure of a change in thy judgment and thy heart.

1. Make sure of a change in thy judgment concerning sin and obedience. By nature thou hast looked on sin, as Achan on the wedge of gold, and David on Bathsheba, as lovely and desirable; thou hast beheld it through the devil's spectacles, and so hast judged it eligible; if still thou art of the same mind, though thou mayest for shame or fear forbear it a while, yet as two lovers parted by their parents, contrive and conspire how to meet together, and do find some opportunity or other concurring with their desires, so thou wilt find some time to give thy old beloved lusts a visit, and as close and fond embraces as ever. There is a necessity of being renewed in the spirit of thy mind, if thou wouldst not be conformable to the world in sin and folly, Rom. xii. 2. Formerly thou hast looked on holiness as a mean, contemptible thing, as a foolish, ridiculous thing, as a fruitless, unprofitable thing, John vii. 48, 49; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Job xxi. 15; Mal. iii., and thereupon hast turned thy back upon it; if thou art still of the same opinion, thou wilt be still of thine old ungodly conversation. Till thy mind be enlightened to see the beauty of holiness, the excellency of obedience, the equity of the divine precepts, the right and title that God hath to thy person and service, thou wilt never perform duties to any purpose.

Till thou art turned from darkness to light, thou canst never be turned from Satan to God, Acts xxvi. 18. They must be renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created them, who would put on the new man, which is after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness, Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24. This illumination is requisite in order to the second thing; there must be a change in the judgment, before there can be any in affections.

2. Get thy heart changed about sin and obedience; if there be not a loathing in thee of sin, and a love in thee to holiness, thou wilt not much or long forsake the one, or follow after the other. By nature thou lovest sin as thy meat and drink, Prov. iv. 17; as thy dainties, Ps. cxli; as thy members, Col. iii. 5; as thy right hand and right eye, Mat. xviii.; as thyself, Mat. xvi. 24. Now whilst this love continueth, thou canst never leave sin. As the dog may forbear the meat on the table whilst the servant's eye is on him, for fear of the cudgel; but when he can come at it alone and escape, he will fall to it greedily. If, from a conviction of the great evil of sin, thy heart be not brought to abhor it, though some qualm of conscience, or sharp providence, may make thee desist from it at present, yet when these distempers, as thou countest them, are

gone, thy stomach will come; and as one recovered of an ague, thou wilt fall to more greedily, and feed on it more largely than ever. By nature thy heart is set against obedience. Thy voice is, I will not have this man to rule over me; the voice of thy heart, which was the voice of their lips, for they spoke plain English, 'As for the word that thou hast spoken to us, in the name of the Lord, we will not do it,' Jer. xliv. 16. Both the king and his laws are odious to thee, and how then shall they be obeyed? If thy heart continue thus bent against holiness, dost thou think thou canst mind it? All thy shows, and shadows, and flourishes, and profession, and privileges, and purposes, and promises, will signify nothing for holiness, or against sin, till thou canst say with David, 'I hate every false way: but thy law do I love,' Ps. cxix. He is hardly separated from his master, be he God or Satan, who is bound and fastened to him with the heart-strings of love. And the devil shall find it a tough task to rob Christ of that servant who takes pleasure and delight in his work. Therefore, reader, thy judgment must be altered, that thou mayest judge of sin and holiness aright, and thereby thy heart be brought out of love with sin, and in love with holiness; and then the work of piety will go on pleasantly, and thou wilt cheerfully obey the divine commands. His statutes will be thy songs, whilst thou art in this house of thy pilgrimage, Ps. cxix. Oh how readily wilt thou set about thy business, when the laws of God are the joy of thy heart! Ps. cxix. 111; and thy delight is in his law, Ps. i.; when thou hast a nature in thee that inclines, and enableth, and engageth thee to godliness; when thou canst savour and relish duties and ordinances, and taste them more pleasant to thy soul than ever the greatest dainties have been to thy body.

If thou wouldst be truly and positively holy, thou seest, reader, a necessity of conversion; without it thou canst no more act holily, than a dead man can move, or a stone walk, or the tide of itself turn backward, when in its full strength and career. What then wilt thou do? For I must confess, withal, that this regenerating work, which is a resurrection from the dead, and a new creation, is altogether beyond thy power. Thou canst as soon stop the sun in its course, and seal up the influence of the stars, as convert thyself. But to encourage thee, know that there is help to be had; God hath proclaimed himself the author of it: James i. 18, 'Of his own will begat he us (and his word and ministers the instruments of it) by the word of truth;' so Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. iv. 15. So that thy work must be to wait on God in his word, and to beg hard of him

that he would be found of thee in his own way. Alas! how shouldst thou fill heaven and earth night and day with thy cries, and groans, and tears, and prayers, when thou considerest, except thou livest to God, and walkest after the Spirit, thou art lost for ever; and without a new heart and new spirit thou canst not live or walk so; and none but God can do this for thee. O friend, fall down on thy knees before him, acknowledge thy unworthiness; urge God with his promise, 'I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put into you; and I will take away your hearts of stone, and give unto you hearts of flesh. And I will put my spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my ways,' &c., Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. God cannot deny his own handwriting; he will make good what he hath spoken. Look up to Jesus Christ to plead for thee, who died to purchase holiness, and delights to see that paid which he hath bought; and hath God engaged to him, 'that he shall see the travail of his soul, to his satisfaction,' Isa. liii. 11; and persevere in so doing, knowing thou shalt reap in time, if thou faintest not.

CHAP. XLII.

Another cause of sins of omission, ignorance; with the cure of it, labouring after knowledge.

2. Another cause of sins of omission is ignorance. They who know not their master's will can never do it. Let papists say that ignorance is the mother of devotion; the word of God and our own experience do loudly speak the contrary: Eph. iv. 18, 'They are estranged from the life of God (*i.e.*, a life of holiness, a life in heaven) through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.' A blind man may well miss his way, and a blind mind can never do his work. Whatever the world talks of their honesty and goodness, notwithstanding their ignorance, 'without knowledge the mind is not good,' Prov. xix. 2. They presume to excuse their dark heads with their good hearts, but these two are inconsistent. A dark cellar is not fuller of vermin, nor a dark hole of dust, than a dark heart is of filthiness, Hosea iv. 1, 2. They who want the knowledge of God are under the dominion of the devil; he is the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. And I am sure the unclean spirit never bears sway in a clean heart, nor this evil spirit in a good heart. No, as the eagle, he first pecks out the eyes of his prey, and then devours it. How easily is a blind

soul conquered and killed by the enemies of his salvation! What error will not an ignorant creature swallow down? He is like water, ready to take the impression and form of what vessel you please to pour him into. Mat. xxii. 29, our Saviour tells the Sadducees that 'they erred, not knowing the Scriptures;' and the apostles told the Corinthians, who doubted at least about the resurrection, as the Sadducees denied it, 'Some have not the knowledge of God,' 1 Cor. xv. 32. What crime will not an ignorant man commit? Knowledge to the mind is as light to the world, which discovers our way, and thereby prevents our wanderings; but it is no wonder at all for men, in the night and darkness of ignorance, to go astray, or to stumble and fall. 'If a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because he seeth not the light of this world,' John xi. 9. Why do we think sin is called a work of darkness? truly not only because it is from the devil, the prince of darkness, and he that doth evil loveth darkness, hates the light, and it is the way to blackness of darkness, but also because it is conceived in the womb of a dark heart. The prince of darkness may beget what monsters he pleaseth on such persons: 2 Tim. iii. 3, 'Ignorant women were laden with divers lusts.' No soil fuller of such weeds than that which is not manured with knowledge. St Paul's ignorance was the ground of his wasting the church at such a cruel rate: 'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, but I did it ignorantly,' 1 Tim. i. 13. That monster sin, which the sun hid his head as ashamed to behold, the murder of our Lord Jesus Christ, had ignorance for its mother: Acts iii. 15, 'Ye killed the Prince of life;' ver. 17, 'And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.' So the apostle Paul, 'Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.' Now if ignorance be the cause of such grievous commissions, it must much more be the cause of omission; for in all these commissions there are great omissions; but I shall shew particularly that ignorance is one cause of sins of omission.

We are bound to love God, and that 'with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength,' Mat. xxii. 37; but is it possible to love one whom we are ignorant of? Did ever any fear an unknown evil, or desire or delight in an unknown good? Are not the greatest rarities and richest jewels of the world, that are undiscovered, undesired? The apostle saith, 'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?' 1 John iii. I am sure he that doth not so much as see God with the eye of his soul, his understanding, can never love

him. We say, What the eye sees not, the heart grieves not; it is as true, what the eye seeth not, the heart loves not.

Who can obey divine precepts who is ignorant of them? or fear divine threatenings who doth not know them? or be allured by divine promises who is altogether a stranger to them? God, and Christ, and pardon, and life, and promises, and covenant, may stand long enough knocking at the door of a heart fastened with ignorance, before they will find admittance. It is our duty, our great gospel-duty, to believe in Christ, John vi. 'This is his commandment, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent,' 1 John iii. 23. But ignorance hinders this: 'How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?' Rom. x. 14. Who will trust a mere stranger, especially in a matter of weight? I had need to know him well whom I trust with my soul and salvation, with all I am worth for this and the other world. A wise man will not venture his estate, much less his life, least of all his soul, with one of whose integrity, and faithfulness, and ability, and responsibleness, he hath not good assurance. The psalmist's saying is, 'They that know thy name will trust in thee,' Ps. ix. 10. They who know thy grace, and goodness, thy promise, and power, and truth, they will trust thee; but others will not. Paul's hope could not have been so high, nor the wine of his joy so brisk, when his death drew near, had it not been for his great acquaintance with him with whom he had ventured his all: 2 Tim. i. 12, 'I know whom I have believed, (how willing, how ready, how able to save me,) and what I have committed to him he is able to keep for me against that day.' Knowledge is so requisite to faith, that it is once and again put for faith, Isa. liii. 10; 1 Cor. ii. 2; John xvii. 3; Phil. iii. 8, 9; but ignorance is faith's great hindrance.

Again, our duty is to repent upon pain of eternal perdition, Luke xiii. 3; Mat. xi. 22, 23. But ignorance causeth men to omit this as well as the other. Where there is a veil upon the understanding, there is ever a caul upon the heart and conscience. As in the night season, we have always the hardest frosts and the coldest weather; therefore the Holy Ghost tells us, when Israel shall repent and turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away, 2 Cor. iii. 16, 17. While the veil remains they are still turning more and more from God, till wrath come upon them to the uttermost; but when the veil shall be taken away, that they shall see the evil, and mischief, and loathsomeness, and folly of those ways they have turned to; and also for the beauty, and amiableness, and bounty, and kindness of that God they have turned from, then they will

quickly return unto the Lord. Indeed, men may thank their ignorance for most of their omissions, especially the heathen, and many Christians who live in dark corners of the land; ay, and many who are as void and empty of knowledge as the heathen, who live under the gospel. Many of these neglect family duties, closet prayer, a strict sanctification of the Lord's day, edifying others to their power as opportunity is offered them, and several others, because they do not understand them to be their duty.

Reader, the cure of this must be for thee, if ignorant, to labour after the knowledge of God, and thy duty to him. When David leaves his charge with his son Solomon, to serve and worship the blessed God as the great business of his life, mark how he begins with the means thereof, and concludes with the motive thereto: 'And thou, Solomon my son, know the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever,' 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. As if he had said, Solomon, thou son of my love, thou son of my vows, I am now dying, and going to my long home; nature and grace, my love to thee and to God, do both strongly incline me to desire thy welfare, and to wish thee well eternally; I know not better how to speak and declare it, than by charging and commanding thee that whatever thou omittest or neglectest, thou wouldst adore and worship the God of thy fathers, and that not formally and customarily, but solemnly and sincerely, with a perfect heart and willing mind; and to this end there is a necessity of thy knowing him. Till thou knowest his grace and goodness, thou wilt never love him; till thou knowest his holiness and justice, thou wilt never fear him; till thou knowest his promises, and power, and faithfulness, thou wilt never trust him; and till thou knowest his boundless sovereignty and dominion over, his unquestionable right and propriety in, the works of his hands, thou wilt never obey him; therefore study the knowledge of this God of thy fathers, that thou mayest serve him; for be assured, he will not be mocked: 'But with the upright, he will carry himself upright; and with the froward, he will carry himself froward,' Ps. xviii. 'If thou livest after the flesh, thou shalt die; if thou walkest after the Spirit, thou shalt live.' If thou seek him in his own way, with all thy heart, as the great work and business of thy life, he will reveal himself to thee, and be found of thee in a way of grace and favour; but if thou embrace the world, or the flesh, as thy sovereigns or portions, and so cast him off, be confident he will forsake and cast thee off for ever, and then what will devils

do to thee, and what misery will not surprise thee? Friend, God affords thee many helps for knowledge, and wilt thou not labour after it? Shall men stumble, and fall into hell for want of doing their duties, and neglect to do their duties for want of knowledge, and that in the clear sunshine of the gospel, as those do that live in the night and darkness of heathenism and paganism? Reader, wilt thou not see at midday, at noonday? Shall neither the works nor word of God teach thee the knowledge of him? Wouldst thou do the will of God or not? if thou wouldst not, I have no more to say to thee, but the Lord have mercy on thee. If thou wouldst, as thou must, if ever thou be saved, Mat. xxiii.; thou seest a necessity of knowledge, for can thy child or servant do thy will if they be ignorant of thy will? Is it rational to expect that one who knoweth not what thou wouldst have, should do what thou wouldst have? Why canst not thou make thy beast as pliable, and as obedient to thee as thy son? Is it not because thy beast is not so capable of understanding thy mind as thy son is? Nay, if thou shouldst do what God commands, and not know that he commanded it, thou couldst not obey him in it, for all obedience consisteth in doing what God bids us, because he bids us, Ps. cxix. 5, 6. For unless his authority do principally sway the conscience, in our subjection to what he enjoins, it is nothing worth. God hates blind sacrifices, Mal. i. Reader, wouldst thou have high and honourable thoughts of God? wouldst thou have awful and reverential apprehensions of God? wouldst thou have heart and life wholly at his command? then know him: Ps. lxxvi. 1, 'In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel.' How comes his name to be so much reverenced, and praised, and admired in his church, more than in all the world beside, but because there he is better known? 'In Judah is God known, thence his name is so great in Israel:' 'Father, the world hath not known thee, but these have known thee,' John xvii. So that, reader, if ever thou wouldst esteem, and honour, and love, and obey God, get the knowledge of him. This is spiritual life, and the seed of eternal, John xvii. 3. Be not brutish in the shape of a man, as the horse and mule which hath no understanding, Ps. xxxii. 9, xlix. 20, and xcii. 6, but take any pains in hearing, and reading, and meditating, and in conferring with others, that thou mayest get knowledge: 'They shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' The merchant ventures to and fro, from port to port, in a wooden bottom, to increase his wealth, and get some precious pearls. Knowledge is a jewel of much greater value. Let no labour be thought too much for it;

especially 'cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding; seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God,' Prov. ii. 4-6.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Another cause of sins of omission, idleness, with the cure of it.

3. A third cause of sins of omission is idleness. Negative holiness requires no great pains; a man may forbear drunkenness, swearing, lying, stealing, &c., without any great labour. A man may keep his bed, or his chair all day, and so do no hurt. Some men, as the historian observes, are *sola socordia innocentes*, do no mischief, not because they dare not, God having forbidden it, but because it would cost them some pains to do it. Their heads must work to plot and contrive it, and their hands to manage and execute it. There is a sluggish temper and poorness of spirit in many men, who prefer a mean quiet before a treasure with labour. The sluggard would do evil as other men, only he is unwilling to lose his sleep and ease, as they do to accomplish their wicked designs; and he would do good as others, (I mean in regard of the matter of duties,) only he is loath to be at the labour. Negative godliness requires only a sitting still, and a forbearing to meddle with such and such things which God hath prohibited; but positive godliness, if to any purpose, requires industry, and zeal, and activity, and the putting forth our strength and spirits, which makes the idle wretch take his leave of it. The slothful servant could let his talent lie still in the earth, and not lay it out in gaming and rioting, &c., and continue his slothfulness; but if he had improved it, in trading for his master's profit, he must have gone up and down, and taken pains.

It is easy to forbear cursing, and swearing, and blaspheming the name of God; these may suit well with a torpid, idle person, but to call on the name of God, to pray fervently, to pray without ceasing, to lift up the soul in prayer, to pour out the heart, to stir up one's-self to wrestle with God, to seek him with all the heart, with the whole heart; this will require some pains and labour, and this makes him forbear it. Again, it is no great pains for a man to keep himself from hearing lascivious, vain, backbiting, or flattering, or evil language; a man may but forbear coming into such

company, or depart from them when he understandeth them about such wickedness; but for a man to hear the word of God with reverence as the word of God, with meekness as willing to be governed by it, with faith as believing all the promises and threatenings of it to be of unquestionable certainty, and with a resolution to practise it as knowing we shall be judged by it at the day of Christ; this will cost some head and heart work, which the sleepy drone is unwilling to come to.

Again, the right performance of duties, in regard of the manner, requires much more pains than in regard of the matter; therefore they who take upon them a form deny the power of godliness; and who are not guilty of external, are yet of internal omissions. How many pray or mumble over a few words morning and evening to God, and are pleased with it, as if therefore all were well, and think God pleased too, who never trouble themselves with minding that reverence, humility, uprightness, sense of want, faith in Christ, importunity of desires, which God expects in every prevalent prayer; and the reason is, because the former is so easy, and the latter so laborious.

Besides, for a man to examine his own heart frequently and impartially, and to call himself to a strict account what he hath been and done in the world, and what is like to become of him, and to befall him for ever; for him to take the looking-glass of the law of God, and therein to behold his heart and life, and having compared his practices with the divine precepts, which are exceeding broad, to accuse, and judge, and condemn, and loathe, and abhor himself; for him to lay himself low before the Lord, and to acknowledge and confess with shame, and anger, and grief, his filthiness and wickedness, and to beg pardon and grace as earnestly as one that believes, if his requests be denied, his poor soul is damned for ever;—friend, friend, this is hard and painful work, and the idle man will not meddle. Once more, he that will be positively holy, must watch himself in all his ways, must watch for opportunities of service to God; he must catch at them, and improve them, when he hath them put into his hand; he must stand always upon his guard, to defend himself against his enemies; and be as a sparrow upon the house-top, to look about and consider where he may pick up any spiritual food for his soul; he must design, and study, and contrive how he may spend his time, and parts, and strength, and estate to the best advantage of his Lord and master; and think nothing too much, no pains, no labour, no, not his blood for his Lord's honour; and will a sluggard, that lieth with his hands in his bosom, do

this, or any part of this? Ah friend, the sleepy world dream of happiness upon easy terms, as if they could walk to heaven in a pleasant meadow, or be carried to heaven in a down bed; but it must not be, it cannot be—*difficilia quæ pulchra.* Canst thou obtain anything that is excellent unless thou art diligent? Doth the tradesman get an estate who is not industrious to look after his customers, his books, and whatsoever concerns his calling? Can he who sits still in his chimney corner, and neither minds buying in nor selling out, nor takes care how things are ordered in his shop, ever expect to be rich? Reader, if ever thou wilt make anything of it, there is a necessity of shaking off this slothfulness. I must tell thee, an idle person is the devil's cushion, his own burden, unlike and loathsome to God, and a wen in the body politic where he lives. To cure this, reader, I must say to thee, as the apostle to the Ephesians, 'Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead,' Eph. v. 14. Friend, thy work is not to be done sleeping; God work, soul work, eternity work is not to be done sleeping. Labouring, wrestling, fighting, striving, running, are not to be done sleeping, John vi. 27; Gen. xxxii. 24; Mat. vi. 13; 1 Cor. ix. Dost thou think to attain everlasting pleasures and not to take pains? Doth God value his blissful mansions at so low a rate as to throw them away upon those who slight them, and judge them unworthy their utmost endeavours? Is the price of heaven fallen since the Redeemer's being in the world? Then it was, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof,' Mat. vi. 33; 'and strive to enter in at the strait gate,' Mat. vii. 33; 'and labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life,' Mat. vi. 27; and is it now laze and loiter, and be blessed for ever? Though God doth not expect from thee a natural price for his Son,—that is impossible for men or angels to give,—yet he doth expect that pactional price which he hath set down in his word, as the condition of those that shall have a part in him.

Reader, dost thou know what pains the merchant takes for corruptible treasures, how he ventures his life in a wooden bottom, and a tempestuous ocean, and is every moment in danger of death; how he sails from haven to haven, disposing and exchanging commodities, trading and trafficking with persons of divers countries and languages, and all to get a little wealth? And if worldly pearls cannot be had without pains, dost thou think the pearl of great and inestimable price, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fruits of his precious blood, may be had for nothing? I tell thee, as God valued his Son at so high a rate, as to accept of his temporary sufferings

as fuller satisfaction to his justice on the behalf of millions of souls, than if they had fried millions of millions of millions of years in hell; so God will make thee value and prize him, if ever thou partake any benefit by him. And if thou once comest to know his worth, and to esteem him accordingly, thou wilt think no toil, no sweat, nay, no blood too good or too much for him.

Friend, ponder the work of positive godliness, and then judge whether diligence be not requisite. Closet duties, as praying, reading, self-examining, and family duties must daily be performed, and that with life and vigour, and all the soul, and all the strength. Thy earthly calling must be followed with heavenly affections, and whilst thy occupation is amongst men, thy conversation must be with God. In all companies, and at all seasons, and in all conditions, thou art to be in the fear of God, and watchful over thyself, that thou dost nothing to displease him, and solicitous how thou mayest do that which is most pleasing to him. Thou must love God with all thy heart, when he seems most angry with thee; and trust in his goodness, when he inflicts never so great or so many evils on thee. Thy duty is to believe in a crucified Christ, and so venture thy soul on the death of another, upon the bare warrant of Scripture; thou art required to deny, and bemoan, and abhor thyself, as near and dear as thou art to thyself, to mortify thy earthly members, and to cut off thy right hand, and pluck out thy right eye. Not a relation, not a condition, not an ordinance, not a providence, but calls for duties, suitable duties, to be performed, and not one of these duties but calls for suitable graces to be exercised. Besides, ere these duties can be performed, and these graces exercised, many strong and sturdy lusts must be subdued; the allurements, on one hand, of a flattering, gaudy, giddy, skin-deep world, as babies to please children, trampled on; and its affrightments, as clothes stuffed with straw, to scare birds, must be despised; ay, and all the powers and policies of hell combated with, and conquered. And, friend, can all this be done with thy hands in thy pocket, or without pains? It is in vain to think of freedom from omissions whilst thou liest on the bed of security. Water corrupteth, and breeds venomous creatures, whilst it standeth still; it is preserved sweet by motion, as we experience in running streams. The unused iron rusteth, whilst that which is used groweth daily more bright. Neither nature nor art will afford us anything that is good, without labour. The ground will not yield its fruit, unless the husbandman dung, and plough, and dress, and harrow it. Can any artist make an excellent clock, or watch, or curious vessel, with-

out pains? And wilt thou presume of holiness and heaven without it? The heavens are ever in motion for the benefit of this lower world, and never stand still but by a miracle. The earth is always labouring to bring forth fruit for our profit and delight, and never idle and barren, but as cursed of God for man's sin. Adam, in his estate of innocency, was by God himself taught a lesson of industry, and commanded to till the ground. Our blessed Saviour was not idle; but when he undertook the work of man's redemption, went up and down doing good, denying himself his sleep. A great while before day he was at prayer, Mark i., and he prayed all night. He denied himself his food when he was hungry; and, disappointed of food at the fig-tree, he goeth not to a house to eat, but to the synagogue to preach. He denied himself his ease and pleasure, and all to follow his business, John ix. 4. As he said, so he did: 'I must work the work of him that sent me whilst it is day.' And did Christ contend, and fight, and strive, and wrestle night and day before he was crowned, or could enjoy the joy set before him, and dost thou think to have all for nothing?

Reader, to conclude this head, consider Rom. xii. 11, 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' Where we have the duty I am persuading thee to, commanded by the apostle, in regard of its great weight, extraordinary difficulty, or backwardness to it, both ways: 1. Negatively, 'not slothful in business;' *i.e.*, you will do nothing at it if ye be sleepy or slothful; the business is not such as may be done in a dream. As idleness is the burial of our persons, so slothfulness is the burial of our actions. It is bad to be slow at our business, but much worse to be slothful. 2. Affirmatively, 'fervent in spirit;' this is the greatest diligence possible. Fervency is the heat and height of the affections, and is as contrary to slothfulness as fire to water. When the powers and faculties of the soul are wound up to their highest pitch in the service of God, then a man may be said to be fervent in spirit. The labour of the body is nothing to the labour of the brains, and the sweating of the outward man is little to the industry of the inward man. He that hath the heart of a man may command his purse, and hands, and what he hath. Fervency of spirit, or intension of mind about any business, will call in his time, and wealth, and strength, and all to its assistance.

3. The duty is urged by a high and weighty reason, 'serving the Lord.' It is the majesty, excellency, purity, and boundless perfection of the object which requires such warmth, and life, and heat, and fervency of spirit in those that adore him. Though we

may make bold with our fellow-dust and ashes, with those that are of the same make and mould with ourselves, yet the Most High, he whose name alone is excellent, the God of the spirits of all flesh, to whom the whole creation is less than nothing, he is not to be made bold with. His immense being and perfections command the highest and the hottest affections. The greatest prince must not be put off with less than the greatest peasant.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Another cause of omissions is vain excuses men have, that omissions are little sins; with the cure of it.

4. A fourth cause of sins of omission is a presumption, or false opinion, that men have concerning them, and so they think to excuse them.

1. That they are little sins, and so not much to be minded.

2. That the performance of them would be unseasonable at this or that time, and so they are put off to another time, that never comes.

3. That when they are called to the performance of this or that duty, they neglect it with this excuse, that it is but one duty they live in the neglect of, or it can be no great matter for once to omit it. Reader, I shall handle these severally, and shew, first, that these foolish excuses which men please themselves with, do cause omissions, and then direct to the cure of each severally.

1. The first excuse is, that omissions are small sins, and this opinion is generally rooted in all men. Because they do not fly in the face of conscience, disturb the light of reason, trouble the societies where, and debauch the persons amongst whom, we live, as some sins of commission do; therefore they fancy, for it is but a fancy, that they are light and little, and no great matter is to be made of them. When once a man hath sucked in this poisonous opinion, no wonder if his heart swell, and his life swarm with such sins. For when his nature hath a reluctancy against the positive precepts, much more than against the negative, and his lazy temper sets him farther off, and he believes that they are peccadilloes, and little taken notice of by God; yea, that a pardon in the high court of heaven is allowed in course for such small offences; what should hinder but he should abound and continue in them to the end of his life, unless his judgment of them be altered?

In all our converses and dealings, we are most careless about matters which we judge to be of small concernment; for it is judged a part of folly to be very solicitous about toys and trifles. If I have a slight cut on my finger, or my skin raised, I possibly let it go, and am nothing troubled about it; but if a bone be broken, or a vital part infected, I am not a little perplexed, and quickly apply the best means for the cure of it. The less I apprehend the danger to be, the less care I take to prevent it.

We see it by experience about the laws of men, that those laws, the breach of which they presume will be generally winked at, and little taken notice of by the magistrate, as relieving beggars, and several others, are seldom observed, and men at most are indifferent whether they keep them or no; but for those laws which they believe will be severely reckoned for, if men break them, as those against thefts, murders, ravishments, treasons, and the like, these they will be tender of, and take care lest they should incur their penalties. Truly, so it is about the laws of God. We do usually make some conscience of those laws which we apprehend have death, and hell, and wrath, and damnation attending the breach of them; but those laws, the breach of which we presume is no great matter, and little minded by God, we are careless and indifferent about.

To cure this, reader, consider these three or four particulars.

(1.) I grant that there are degrees of sin. All sins are not of the same size, nor every sinner of the same stature. All ordinary births which Satan begets upon the hearts of men are not of the same bigness, yet sometimes we find monsters born. Some sins are compared to camels, others to gnats, Mat. xxiii. 24; some to motes, others to beams, Mat. vii. 3; some to talents, others to farthings or pence. Our Saviour tells us of a creditor who had two debtors, the one owed much more than the other, Luke vii. 41, and xvi. 5. Some sins are pardonable, other sins unpardonable: Mat. xii. 31, 'Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.' The Stoics, as Tully observes in his Paradoxes,—and the Jovinians, as St Jerome[1] testifieth in his Second Book against them, sided with them,—held that all sins were equal, because all sins are aberrations from the rule, and a going beyond the bounds; but it is to be considered that some may wander farther from their rule, and out of their way, than others. Somemay shoot widerthan others, though both miss the mark.

[1] Epist. 29, cap. 1.

A sin against the first table, *cæteris paribus*, is greater than a sin against the second, 1 Sam. ii. 25, as being more immediately against God. Whereas all sin hath its sinfulness from its opposition and offensiveness to so infinite a majesty: Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned.' Thus we read that witchcraft and idolatry, which directly disown God, are the greatest sins, 1 Sam. xv. 13; and our Lord Jesus, when asked what was the first and great commandment, answers, 'To love the Lord our God with all our hearts,' &c., Mat. xxii. 11. Spiritual sins are greater than bodily sins: 1. As those by which we most imitate the devil, who is for spiritual wickedness in high places, Eph. vi. All sin is from Satan *per modum servitutis;* but these sins *per modum imaginis.* 2. As those sins by which we most directly oppose God, who is a spirit, John iv. 24, and therefore God most directly sets himself in battle array against them. 3. As those sins that defile and pollute most the chiefest part of man, his spirit, in which regard the apostle calls them filthiness of spirit, and distinguisheth them from the filthiness of the flesh, 2 Cor. vii. 1. 4. As those sins which are the spring of all bodily and outward sins: 'Out of the heart proceed murders, blasphemies, thefts,' &c., Mat. xv. 19. 5. As those sins have more of the heart and spirit in them, the malignity of sin, in regard of its object, is from the immensity of that God against whom it is committed; in regard of its subject, it is from the degree of that heartiness and willingness with which it is committed. To backslide in heart, is more than to backslide from God with our tongues, and deny him vocally: Prov. xiv. 14, 'Such a one shall be filled with his own ways and wickedness.' To err in heart is the provocation indeed, Heb. iii. 10. To err in heart is much worse than to err in our heads; the more of the heart and spirit in any service, the more lovely and acceptable to God; the more of the heart and spirit in any sin, the more loathsome and abominable to God. 6. As those sins which have their full scope and swing. In bodily sins a man is curbed, as in uncleanness, by the weakness or weariness of his body; in prodigality, and luxury, and pride, by the weakness of his estate; in murder, by his antagonist's strength, or his fear of the law, or want of opportunity. But spiritual sins have none of these obstacles or hindrances. He whose body is so weak, that he cannot know one woman, may yet in his spirit defile hundreds in one day. He whose estate is so small, that he can scarce maintain himself, will yet in his thoughts keep a table for a prince, throw away hundreds upon provision for the flesh, and be as great an emperor as he pleaseth. He whose sick-

ness, and lowness of quality, and want of a convenient season, hindereth him from doing his neighbour the least actual injury, may yet in his spirit slay more than Samson did with the jaw-bone of an ass in a much less time.

Sins against knowledge are greater than sins of ignorance. Our Saviour tells the Jews, that if they had been blind, they had had no sin; 'but because ye say ye see, therefore your sin remaineth,' John ix. Sins against knowledge are sins against our own light, and thereby we offer violence to ourselves, Rom. i. 21–28. 2. More daring to God; for he who is ignorant of his master's will, cannot do anything, or omit anything to dare him or to provoke him, because he doth not know what is displeasing to him; but he who knoweth what God would have, and omits what he commandeth, or doth what he forbids, may rather be supposed to commit the one or omit the other, because of his enmity to God. 3. As more against the mercy of God. Knowledge is a great mercy. The understanding of man is the candle of the Lord. And sins against it are therefore the more provoking, because against the divine goodness, John xv. 4. These sins against knowledge make way for the sin against the Holy Ghost, Mat. xii. 32; Heb. vi. 4–6. Sins against the gospel are greater than sins against the law. Those sins are against the natural law, the moral, and the law of faith, Rom. iii. 27, and are committed in the face of the sun, as they are against the clearest light, so they are against the sweetest love, and therefore the more sinful. A taper in the hand of a ghost makes it look the more ghastly: 'This is the condemnation,' John iii. 19.

Sins repeated and reiterated are much greater than sins once committed. Hereby the habit of sin is strengthened; frequent acts root the habits. Hereby the long-suffering of God is abused; for the more patient he is, the more he is provoked, Rom. ii. 4. As in numbers, one, in the first place, stands but for a single one, in the second place ten, in the third place for a hundred, the fourth place for a thousand; so here, each repetition is a great aggravation: Prov. xxix. 1, 'He, that being often reproved hardeneth his heart, shall be (see the grievousness of his punishment, not afflicted, but) destroyed; (the quickness of it) speedily, (and the irrecoverableness of it,) and that without remedy.' It is one thing to fall into the water, another thing to lie there; it is the latter that drowns men.

The sins of the people of God are greater respectively than the sins of others; therefore they are said only to do evil, as if all the

world beside were innocent, Jer. xxxii. 'The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me,' Deut. xxxii. 6. 1. As these sins are committed against the greatest obligations on God's part, against the electing, calling, pardoning, adopting, saving love, each of these is an aggravation of sin. God accents Israel's sin from his special kindness, Hosea xi. 1; 'although I was a husband to them.' 2. As they are committed against the most solemn engagements on our part. Every of God's people doth expressly before God, angels, and men promise and covenant to be the Lord's, wholly, universally, and eternally the Lord's. The Israelites avouched God to be theirs. And David swore that he would be God's obedient servant: Ps. cxix., 'I have sworn, and I will perform, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' And it is no mean sin to be guilty of perjury. God aggravates the sin of his people by this, 'They all like men have transgressed the covenant.' 3. As these sins are committed against the greatest helps to obedience, an enlightened mind, a renewed will, sanctified affections, an awakened conscience, and a principle of life or new nature, are all opposed and resisted by their disobedience. This cut the heart of David, that God made him to know wisdom secretly, Ps. li. 6. 4. As the sins of these men cause God to be more blasphemed and dishonoured than the sins of others, Lev. xxii. 31. Nathan tells David, 'By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme,' 2 Sam. xii. 14. Indeed, these, by falling into sin after their repentance, seem to repent of their repentance, and to lick up their vomit.

Sins of omission may be greater in respect of the person committing them, a believer; in regard of the means the offender enjoyeth, the word of the divine grace; in regard of the matter he omits, the duties of the gospel; and in many other respects, than sins of commissions in others, who have not such circumstances.

It is very evident, and cannot be denied, that sins are unequal; for though original sin, as the logicians say of *substantia*, be not capable of *magis et minus*, of intension or remission, of aggravation or diminution; yet actual sins are like qualities and quantities which receive more or less addition or subtraction, and have their latitude and degrees. For this cause under the law there were diversity of sacrifices for diversity of sin, Lev. iv.

(2.) I answer, that no sins are little simply. Though there is a difference of sins considered comparatively, and so sins may be said to be little, if compared with those that are more heinous, yet no

sins absolutely considered are little. The least sin resembleth the earth, which, though but a point to the heavens, yet is a vast immeasurable body in itself.

[1.] Because all sins are against a great and infinite majesty. Reader, it is the excellency of the person whose authority is contemned, and commands violated, and whose name is dishonoured by sin, that gives sin its name, speaks its heinous nature, and is the highest aggravation of it, Num. xxxii. 23, and this is done in all sins. Friend, till thou canst hear of a little God contemned, abused, disgraced, and resisted by sin, speak no more of little sins in excuse for thy allowance of them, Zech. i. 5.

[2.] Because the price paid to make satisfaction for all sins, of what size or sort soever, was a great price, Lev. v. 17, 18. It is the blood, the precious blood of the Son of God, and that only that can wash away the least sin, 1 John i. 7. Aaron must offer sacrifice for pollution in a man's dream, that he never thought of possibly but in sleep; and for the sins which the Jews committed ignorantly, not understanding them to be any offence to God; and, in answer to those types, our Redeemer is said to die for the ignorance, the errors of the people. Reader, till that thou canst tell of a sin so little, that somewhat less than the death of him who was God will satisfy for it, call no sin little.

[3.] Because no little punishment is the due and desert of every sin. The wages of sin is death, and hell, and infinite wrath of an almighty God; and therefore it is the wages of every sin, Rom. vi. 23. *A qua tenus ad omne valet consequentia.* Because fire, as fire, burns, therefore every fire burns; because sin, as sin, damneth, therefore every sin damneth. So that all sins bring greater intolerable eternal sufferings. Endless banishment from the blissful presence of God and Christ, everlasting burnings amongst devils and damned ones, is the desert of every sin. Reader, when [1] thou canst tell of a little fire, and little torments in hell, and little horrors and terrors of soul, there to be the fruit of sin; call not any of thy sins little. Another thing, reader, I would advertise thee of, no sin is little to him who thinks it so. Sins may be said to be mortal or venial: 1. In respect of their own nature, and so no sins are venial, but the least is mortal; 2. In respect of the divine favour; 3. In regard of the issue. In the two last respects, all the sins of such as believe and repent are venial; not in the popish sense, so as to be in their own nature no transgressions, but preter-transgressions of the divine law, and not properly sins, but analogically, but they

[1] That is 'till.'—ED.

are venial, as God, for Christ's sake, doth forgive them. Either those sins which they term venial are forbidden by the law of God or not; if not, they are no sins, or the law of God is imperfect; if they be forbidden, they are mortal: 'For cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do it,' Gal. iii. 10.

(3.) I answer, suppose sins of omission were little, yet it is folly and madness upon this to allow of them. A mote in the eye is a little thing, it hindereth our sight of the sun, and is big enough to put us to great pain, and to disturb our whole body. The flies and lice of Egypt were little creatures, but great plagues. The sting of a bee is a little thing, but it puts us to grievous torment. He who refused to give a few crumbs, was denied one drop, Luke xvi. 21. A fly spoils an alabaster box of ointment; a little poison spoils much wholesome liquor.

[1.] If they were little, yet they are sins, and that enough to set a good man against them. It is as much treason to coin a penny, as a twenty shillings piece; because the royal authority is as much violated in the one as in the other. There is the same rotundity in a little ball or bullet, as in a great one. The authority of God is as truly despised in the breach of the least commandments, as some are called, as in the breach of the greatest, as others are called, Mat. xxii. 36, 37. A sprig of wormwood hath the same bitterness with the plant. A drop of sea-water hath the same saltness with the ocean. The smallest sin is a breach of the royal law as well as the greatest, 1 John iii. 4. Though the object may be different, yet the command is still the same; and the wise man tells us that the law must be kept as the apple of the eye, which is offended by the smallest dust, Prov. vii. 2. The brats of Babylon must be dashed against the wall, as the strongest men must be destroyed.

It is worth the while to observe in Scripture how lesser sins, being of the same nature, have given to them the names of the greater. Malice is called murder, lustful looks adultery, sitting at idolatrous feasts (though with no thought of worshipping the idol) idolatry, Job xxxi. 27, 28.

This is argument enough against the smallest sin, that it is a sin. As the will of God is the highest motive to obedience, so also against disobedience. All sin, as sin, affronts the divine dominion, as if he had not authority to command us; and to the divine wisdom, as if God did not know what were fit for us to do, and to forbear; and to the divine grace, as if he had no respect to our good

in his precepts; and is not this sufficient reason for our hatred of it, and watchfulness against it?

Reader, I know thou wouldst not venture upon a spoonful of poison, but wouldst consider it is of the same nature with a pint or a quart; and why wilt thou venture on any sin, be it never so little in thine eye, when it is of the same nature, a transgression of the same law, a contempt of the same Lord, with the greatest. It is murder to stifle an infant in the womb, as well as to kill a grown person.

Reader, whatsoever hath the nature of sin, must be the object of thy hatred, let it be comparatively little or great.

[2.] These little sins, if they be so, will make way for greater. Little wedges open the way in the most knotty wood for bigger. As thieves, when they go to rob a house, if they cannot force open the doors, or break through the walls, let in a little boy at the window, who unbolts and unlocks the door, and so lets in the whole rabble; thus the devil, when men startle at greater sins, and by them he hath no hopes to get possession of their souls, he puts them upon those sins which they think little, and by these insensibly enters; for they once admitted, open the doors of the eyes, of the ears, and of the heart too, whereby the whole legion enter, and rule and domineer in their souls to their ruin. Men do not, indeed they cannot, imagine the woeful consequences of neglecting their watch against the least sin. How many who have been so modest and maidenly at first, that they would not so much as give a lascivious person the hearing, when he hath spoken wantonly; yet by giving way to their own foolish thoughts, have at last prostituted themselves to their pleasure without any shame. Sinners increase to more ungodliness; when they once venture down hill, they know not where nor when to stop. Workmen bore holes with little wimbles, which make way for the driving of great nails.

When Pompey, saith Plutarch, could not prevail with a city to billet his army, he yet persuaded them to take in a few weak, maimed soldiers; but those soon recovered strength, and let in the whole army, to command and govern the city. Thus Satan, by sins of infirmity, prevails at length for sins of presumption. Great storms arise out of little gusts; and clouds no bigger than the palm of a man's hand comes in time to cover the whole heavens. The greatest river is fed with drops, and the biggest mountain made up of atoms. As Sylla said, when in his proscription time, that he slew so many, one pleaded for the life of Cæsar, *In uno Cæsare multi Marii:* In one little youth, many old subtle men; so in one little sin, there may be many great ones. When one evil spirit

hath got lodging in the heart, he prepares it, and makes room for seven more wicked and worse than himself.

Keepers first ply their deer with little beagles till it be heated and blown, and then they put on their great buckhounds. So the devil first plies us with little sins; afterwards, when we are used to them, with greater. One circle made with a stone in the water, makes way for a second greater than it, the second for a third greater than that, &c. Rivers far from their springs grow as they go along greater and greater, and enlarge their channels, till at last they empty themselves into the ocean. Thus sin encroacheth by degrees upon the soul; if it can get but one of its claws into us, it will quickly follow with its head and whole body: 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Unfaithfulness to God is first discovered in the smallest matters, then it proceeds to greater things. As the decay of a tree is first visible in its twigs, but by degrees it goeth on the bigger arms, and from them to the main body.

As it is the nature of a cancer or gangrene to run from one joint or part of the body to another, from the toe to the foot, from the foot to the leg, from the leg to the thigh, and thence to the vital parts. Do we not sometimes see a whole arm imposthumated with the prick of a little finger; and have we not sometimes heard of a great city betrayed by the opening of a little postern? These little sins will grow to great ones if let alone. Time will turn small dust into stone. The poisonous cockatrice at first was but an egg. Small twigs will prove thorny bushes if not timely stubbed up.[1]

[3.] The least sin is damnable. The smallest bit of sin is a murdering morsel: Deut. xxvii. 26, 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.' To eat a little leaven seems a small thing, yet it is a cutting off from Israel, Exod. xii. 19. Gathering a few sticks on a Sabbath, looking into the ark, nay, touching the ark, are all punished with death.

It is observable how God urgeth the command to abstain from blood, which seems a small matter, with this argument, as they desire God to do any good for them or theirs, Deut. xii. 22–24, and upon pain of death. Friend, a little thing, a prick of a thorn festering, the kernel of a raisin, a small bone in thy throat, may deprive thee of thy natural life; and these little sins, as thou callest them, may hinder thee of eternal life. A small leak in a ship unstopped may sink it. A drachm of poison diffuseth itself to all parts, till it seize and strangle the vital spirits. A penknife

[1] General Norris received a slight wound in the Irish wars, which he neglected; whereupon his arm gangrened, and both arm and life were lost together.

will stab mortally, and kill a man as surely as a sword. A pistol will kill as dead as a cannon. Cæsar was slain, as some report, with bodkins. There are other diseases mortal beside the plague. Some have been eaten up by bears and lions, others by mice and lice. It is spiritual murder to stifle and suppress the conceptions of the Spirit in thy soul, as well as to do open despite to the Holy Ghost.

The Rabbis reckoned up 613 commandments of the law, and distinguished them into greater and lesser; the lesser they judged might be neglected with little or no guilt; but what Scripture makes deadly, men must not make indifferent. God's thoughts are not as their thoughts in this particular: Ezek. xviii. 3, 'The soul that sins shall die,' without a distinction. Thou mayest say of sin as Lot of Zoar, 'It is but a little one, and my soul shall live,' when thou hast much more cause to say, as Jonathan, 'Behold, I have tasted but a little honey, and I must die,' 1 Sam. xiv. 43. I have been guilty of a little sin, and without repentance I must die eternally for it. A little spark may kindle such a fire as may burn down a whole city.

[4.] How little soever they should be in their own nature, they become great by thy allowance. The nature of sin stands not so much in the material part of it, which is often little, but principally in the form or anomy, which is the breach of God's law, and also in the manner or carriage of the heart in its commission. A sin may be great *in abstracto*, as the fact is measured by the law, and as the matter of it may be, and yet small *in concreto*, and by circumstances, as not allowed of or domineering in the soul. On the other side, a sin may be small, as measured by the law, or according to the nature of the fact, and yet great by circumstances, as liked and approved by us. In a corporation, a man of a great estate and quality may be an inferior and underling in point of authority and sway, and one that is of small estate or degree may be chief governor. Sick bodies love to be gratified with some little bit which they love, though it never so much favour their disease. As some favours we receive from God are little in their kind but great in their circumstances, and so very engaging to the creature, as to have a little food sent in when a man is starving, &c.; so there are some sins which may be small in their nature, but by the time when, or wilfulness of the sinner, may be very great. For a man to commit a sin materially greater, is not so great a sin as to commit a lesser with deliberation. To commit actual adultery out of ignorance, or for want of advice, is not so great a sin as for a man to be guilty of adulterous thoughts with allowance and ad-

visedly. Reader, take heed of this, for thou wilt find at last that it will be a hard thing to give them comfort who sin with counsel, though in small matters. A sin little in its nature, the more it is allowed, and the more wilfully committed, the greater it is; nay, it may be much greater than sins materially greater, if these be not committed *plena voluntate*, with a full consent of will. As a little stone thrown with a strong arm will do more harm than a much greater stone thrown with a weak arm; so a little sin committed with security, deliberation, and allowance, will more waste the conscience and wound the soul than far greater out of infirmity and inadvertency. Petty princes usually prove the cruellest tyrants, and do the most mischief to their subjects. Friend, dost thou not consider, wherever sin reigneth, it is horrid heinous, most defiling and damning; and thy little sins may reign as well as great ones. There have been kings of countries, as here in England in the time of the heptarchy, nay, of cities among the Grecians, as well as emperors of vast and large dominions. There are mayors and constables commanding-in-chief in their places, as well as justices and judges. A little hair hanging in the pen may make a great blot, and thy little sins allowed will very greatly defile and wound thy soul. In this sense, what the philosopher saith is true, *Ἀδικήματα ἐλάχιστα*, are *μεγίστα*, the smallest errors prove most dangerous, *Arist. Polit.*, lib. v. cap. 8.

[5.] The baser and unworthier art thou to fall out with thy best friend for a little small matter. Ah, how great is thy ingratitude, to disobey, and provoke, and displease, and dishonour the blessed God, to whom thou art so infinitely obliged, for a poor small business! And what folly and madness is it to forfeit the divine favour, and incur his anger, and to expose thyself to infinite torments, for a trifle, a bauble, a light, little, inconsiderable thing! God aggravates the sin of the Jews, and threateneth them severely for it: Amos ii. 6, 'That they sold the poor for a pair of shoes;' that they sold what was of so great value, his people, for a pair of shoes, so poor and mean a price. Friend, how will he deal with thee, if thou sellest thy own soul and eternal salvation, the blood of thy Saviour, the love of thy Father, and all the joys and delights of the other world, for a pair of shoes—for that which thou thyself acknowledgest is but a small and little matter? Truly, the less the thing, the greater thy contempt in denying to do it. Ah, who will stand with his God for a tittle, for a small matter? Truly, the less the matter is, the greater is the malice that will offend and provoke God for it. How great is the unkindness to stand with

God for a trifle! How little dost thou esteem thy God, the God of all consolation! How little dost value his love, and grace, and favour, and endless fruition, to part with all for little or nothing!

The less, reader, the thing is for or about which thou sinnest, the greater is thy sin. Believe it, that by which thou wouldst excuse thy sin doth increase it. It hath been formerly said, if a man will break his faith, it should be for a kingdom, for something of worth; yet this sinner were a loser, though by breaking his faith he could gain the whole earth; what then is that man who will lie and forswear himself for a penny? Though no man should presume upon sin because its present profit will be great, yet there is more unkindness, more folly, and more sinfulness in sinning for a little. Some, like eagles, will not stoop at flies, scorn to sin for a small matter; others, as ants, will be busy about the least dust, will break the law for a very little; the former are bad, the latter worse.

[6.] The less they are, the more they call for thy care and caution, for they are the harder to be cured. As a wound made with a bodkin, if deep, is hardlier cured than a wound with a sword, because the orifice is so small, and presently almost closeth up, and so the wound bleedeth inwardly, often to the death of the patient. It is much more difficult for the mariner to avoid quicksands, that are hurried hither and thither, than known rocks, though sands are small things, and rocks are great vast bodies. Besides, our proneness to despise and slight them causeth our more frequent falling into them, as also our lying longer in them without repentance.

[7.] Small sins are not expiated without infinite satisfaction, and must they then be dallied with? There is more malignity in the least sin than the whole creation can expel, and more venom than men and angels can antidote against. Friend, consider it; thou sayest they are little sins, therefore I may live in them. Did Christ die for them, and wilt thou live in them? Dost thou not know what prodigious drops of sweat, what clods of blood, what strong cries, and groans, and prayers the least sins cost thy Redeemer? Dost thou not know that their weight was so heavy, as little and light as thou fanciest them to be, that they pressed and bruised his blessed body, that they oppressed and amazed his blessed soul; yea, that they made him, who is valour and courage itself, obedience and dutifulness itself, love and pity itself to shrink and draw back, and pray against his duty to his Father and his own mercy to fallen man, and decline the very end and errand for which he came into the world? Reader, think of it. As Augustine saith, what matters it whether a ship be overwhelmed with one great wave, or sunk by a

small cranny in the bottom, whereat the water enters drop by drop? And elsewhere, what easeth it a man to be pressed to death with a heap of small sand more than with a sow of lead, or to be strangled with a pack-thread rather than with a halter?

Reader, I would not have thee think any of thy sins little. It is unbecoming a Christian to entertain such a thought of his sins; nay, it greatens his sin for him to presume it is little. As we should not lessen the mercies of God, but always think them great, and too great for us, and ourselves less than the very least of them, so we should never lessen our sins, but judge the least of them great, and the lightest of them heavy, and every of them too great and too heavy for us to bear, and upon these accounts loathe and leave them. Friend, think of what I have said of little sins, and certainly thou wilt be of another mind than to allow of them because they are little, and rather reject them because they are sins. Is there anything that God hates but sin, and must that be the object of his hatred? [1] Is there anything that offends God or grieves his Spirit but sin; and will nothing delight and please thee but what provokes and displeaseth him?

(4.) I answer, that omissions are not little sins. I have already largely proved that in some respects, and as they may be circumstantiated, they may be much greater sins than sins of commission. Reader, consider what is written in the danger of sins of omission before the uses, and then judge whether they are little sins or no.

Are they little sins which do most oppose the mind and will of God, which make way for whole herds of sins of commission, and which do exceedingly grieve the good Spirit of God? Are those little sins which God complains of so frequently, threateneth so severely, and punisheth with such dreadful judgments, on their bodies, on their souls in this world, on both eternally in the other world, without any remedy? But, friend, consider farther:

[1.] Can that sin be little which denieth God the highest honour, and greatest homage, and chiefest respect which the creature oweth to him? What is that which is the choicest jewel in the crown of his glory? whence do the greatest revenues of his honour flow? Are not our highest esteem, our hottest love, our strongest trust, and our most reverential awe of his sacred majesty the best and the most we can give him, and can the omission of these be a little sin? The forbearance of commissions is but the skirt, and garment, and outside of that obedience which we owe to God; it

[1] Qu. 'Must that be the object of thy love which is the object of his hatred'? —ED.

is the giving up our hearts and souls to him in our most enlarged desires after him, and spiritual delights in him, and superlative valuation of him, which he requireth of us, and principally looks after: Micah vi. 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' Surely, if any sin be little, it is that which encroacheth least upon the honour of God, not that which injures so greatly his royal prerogative. He that robs his sovereign of some petty goods, cannot be so great a transgressor as he who would rob him of his crown and kingdom.

[2] Is that a little sin which provoketh God to inflict the greatest punishment? Either we must believe that God punisheth men more or less according to the nature of their offences, whether greater or lesser, or else we must accuse him of injustice. The apostle undertakes to prove him righteous, 'Because he renders to every man according to his works,' Rom. ii. 5, 6. If so, where he inflicts the greatest judgment, there must be the greatest sin. Now all divines conclude the punishment of loss, which they say is for our omissions, to be far greater than the punishment of sense, which is for our commissions. It is the general assertion, that departing from God and all good for ever will vex and torture the soul more than the flames of hell can pain and torment the body. Therefore it is observable that our Saviour sometimes speaks as if all the misery of the damned were privative, and did consist in their banishment from him. 'Then will I profess unto them I never knew you. Depart from me ye workers of iniquity,' Mat. vii. 23. This is all. *Pœna damni pœnalior est quam pœna sensus*, (Chrys.) As the sinner hath neglected to do good; 'they have left off to be wise and to do good'; so he shall be banished from all good, and that for ever. The omission of good was his sin, and the omission of good shall be his punishment. 'As he delighted not in blessing, so it shall be far from him.' Ah, how far will that be from the poor creature which shall never, never come to him! Friend, if the pain of loss be greater than that of sense, for which cause in scriptures and fathers hell-torments are called damnation, and this pain of loss be the punishment of thy omissions, then it must needs follow that omissions are greater sins than commissions, and for that cause more severely plagued by God. The presence of God is the heaven of heaven: Ps. xvi. 11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy;' and the loss of God is the hell of hell: 'They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,'

2 Thes. i. 9. Which loss is the fruit of omissions, and therefore, reader, do not presume them little.

[3.] Is that sin little which Christ could not satisfy for without his observation of the whole law? There was requisite, that Christ might be a complete Saviour, both active and passive obedience. His active answers our omissions or sins against the precept; what was neglected by us, was performed by him; and his passive answers our commissions or sins against the prohibition, because we do much evil, he suffered much evil. Now though we think this was a small part of his humiliation, yet upon serious consideration we shall find it otherwise. For him that was the great law-maker to become the law-observer; for him that was above all law, to be made under the law, is a condescension indeed. Therefore the apostle speaks of the love of God to be the greater because he sent his Son made under the law. As the Son of God, the infinite absolute Lord of all, and law-maker to all, he might have pleaded exemption from the law, though the human nature, as a creature, considered separately from the divine, was obliged to the observation of the law; yet being in conjunction with the deity, and making one person with the Son of God, it was privileged as to keeping the law; but he humbled himself to do it, that he might satisfy the divine justice for our omissions. Indeed, it is no disparagement to men, no, not to angels, to be subject to the law of God. It is as essential to them as their dependence is by virtue of their creatureship; but it was a great humiliation in Christ to be bound to that law of which he was Lord, especially if we consider these two things:

1. That he must be man before he could be made subject to the law. For as God, he was altogether above it. As the apostle saith, 'He was made of a woman, made under the law,' Gal. iv. 4. His incarnation was the first, and greatest, and lowest step of his humiliation. It was not so great a marvel, nor so great a suffering for Christ, being man, to die, as for the Son of God to become man; 'he emptied himself, and made himself of no reputation, when he was made in the likeness of man,' Phil. ii. 7. For God to become man was an emptying himself of his credit, and stripping himself of his robes of glory, and is the first enigma in the apostle's mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. He was bound to perfect personal obedience upon pain of the law's curse. I mean not on pain of bearing the law's curse as he did, notwithstanding his perfect obedience for others, but for himself. He was under the same covenant with God in regard

of himself that the first Adam was, and if he had failed in obedience, as Adam did, his human nature had been separated from the divine, and had perished withal in him for ever. That covenant under which the Redeemer was for himself had no grains of allowance for the least infirmity, nor would admit of repentance for the smallest defect or offence; so that, if he had swerved the least from the law, he had been incapable of suffering and satisfying for others, Heb. vii. 2, 28, and also had disjoined the human nature from the divine, which could not continue in conjunction with a sinful manhood; and his human nature, with all he undertook for, must have borne the curse of the law for ever. Reader, is that little which cost Christ so much to satisfy for? Was it easy to fulfil all righteousness, to obey all the rigid exceptions of the law to the utmost, to answer all its demands, which was still crying for work, yet afforded no help, neither allowed the least mercy in case of failing? I hope thou wilt not hereafter live in any omission, upon presumption that it is but a little sin, when it intrencheth so greatly upon the divine prerogative, hath the greatest punishment inflicted on it in the other world, and brought the Son of God to be made of a woman, and so to be made under the law here, that he might satisfy for it. For if after all this thou shouldst continue in it, I must say to thee, as Saul to Jonathan, with some alteration, Knowest thou not that thou hast chosen this son of the devil to thy own confusion? 1 Sam. xx. 30.

CHAPTER XLV.

Another excuse for sins of omission, which is a cause of them, that they would be unseasonable, and so are deferred to that time which never comes, with the answer to it.

2. A second excuse that men have for their omissions, is the unseasonableness of the performance of their duties. They grant that they ought to perform them, that God requires it of them, and they must be done, but the present time is very inconvenient; other affairs now call for their presence, and another time they may be done with more advantage. So the Jews served God about building his house, Hag. i. 2. They acknowledged it was very fit that God's house should be re-edified, and very sad that his house should lie waste, whilst their own were ceiled; but the time was not yet come, it was unseasonable at present, they being amongst wicked neigh-

bours who would possibly scoff at them, and oppose them, if they should go about it; it was best to defer it till another season. Thus Felix, when Paul's discourse of judgment to come had convinced him so far that he trembled, most unhappily denieth him leave to proceed, but defers him to a more convenient season, which never came that we hear of. Many persons put off in a morning closet prayer, and family duties, pretending they shall be better at leisure before noon, and thereby come to neglect them wholly for that part of the day; as Saul forbade the priest to ask counsel of God for want of leisure, 1 Sam. xiv. 19. Others, when alms are desired of them by fit objects of charity, will not deny them positively, but do it really, by deferring it till another season, which the poor creatures never see. Thus the devil destroyeth many souls by prevailing with them to delay their faith and repentance upon pretence; hereafter will be time enough, and then such and such affairs will be over, and then they will be more at leisure to mind them. If he can thus gain time of men, he doubts not but to make them lose thereby a happy eternity; he is pleased well enough to hear men say they must and will repent, they must and will believe, knowing there are few in hell who enjoyed the gospel, but some time or other said as much; but as long as it is in the future tense, I will, and I will, and he can persuade them that they are unseasonable duties at present, he fears nothing, as knowing himself sure enough of his prey.

To take away this cause of omissions, I shall answer this excuse.

(1.) I answer, by confessing, that it may be that some positive duties may at some times be unseasonable. The best sort of food is not always in season. Solomon tells us, 'There is a time to sow, and a time to reap,' Eccles. iii. 1, 2. All the year is not seed-time, only some part of it. And it must be granted that everything is most beautiful in its season, ver. 11; then in its season it is most lustrous and lovely, most amiable and comely. The grace and glory of an action consisteth much in the right timing of it; therefore it is the praise of a good man, that he bringeth forth his fruit in due season, Ps. i. And it highly advanceth the wisdom of God, that all his actions are done in the neck, in the joint, in the fittest opportunity possible: 'When the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son,' Gal. iv. 3, 4. He hath out of his goodness allotted time for every duty: Eccles. iii. 1, 'There is a time to every purpose,' and duty for every part of time, so that a man can never say, at this time I have nothing to do. Nay, God hath allowed a season, an opportunity, for everything, wherein,

by a concurrence of helps and means, it may be done with most ease and advantage, Isa. l. 4.

(2.) I answer, that some positive duties are never unseasonable. To honour our God, to work out our salvation, to keep a good conscience, to love and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, are always in season. These, and suchlike, ought to be concomitant with every part of our time: 'Trust in the Lord at all time,' Ps. lxii. 8. 'I will bless thy name all the day.' 'Blessed are they that keep judgment, and do righteousness at all times, Ps. cvi. 3. Therefore it is, as some observe, that when Solomon mentions a time for several things, he mentions no time for doing evil, because that must never be done; and no time for doing good, because that must ever be done. That which ought to have no being, should have no time to be in; that which ought always to be, needs not the mention of any particular time to be in.

(3.) I answer, that no duties are unseasonable when more good than hurt is done by the present performance of them. To reprove our neighbour offending is a duty; yet if I knew that my reproving him at this time would make him curse and swear, and sin more against God, I would defer it till another time; but if I thought that I should not have another season to do it in, and that present reproof would only put him into a little pet or passion at present, but afterwards probably he would consider it to his advantage, I would embrace the present opportunity. He that will omit that duty till all things concur to his mind for the performance of it, must never perform it. There is hardly a step to be taken in our journey towards heaven but there is a block in the way to make us stumble at it, or go aside for it: that if I will observe the wind, I must not sow at all.

(4.) I answer, Take heed that this pretence of the unseasonableness of duties be not a device of the flesh, and a wile of the devil, to cloak and cover thy unwillingness to performance of them. It is easy to find some shift for every sin; and truly there is none thou canst live in but Satan, and thy own heart together, will help thee to sufficient grounds for them. Scarce any are gone to hell without some reason on their side for going thither.

(5.) I answer, That we must consult God and his word for wisdom to know, and faithfulness to perform, our duties in their best seasons: 'The heart of the wise discerneth both time and judgment,' Eccles. viii. 5. A good man that looks to God and his word with a single eye, desiring to know what he should do, and when he may do it best to the pleasing of God, shall be taught and

led by the Spirit of God in the way which he should go in. The word of God is perfect, and directs thee about the fittest seasons for thy duties; it teacheth thee when to mourn, Joel ii. 13, 14; Isa. xxii. 22, 23; when to rejoice, Exod. xv. 1, 2; Neh. viii. 10; when to pray, and when to sing, James v. 13; when to reprove, and when to be silent, Amos v. 13; when to give, and when to forbear giving, Prov. iii. 27. Yet still there will be much need of Christian prudence, and it may be helpful to thee to observe some general rules.

[1.] That a greater good be preferred before a lesser, and a more weighty duty always have the precedency of what is less weighty. Though a lesser good and a less weighty duty must be minded in their time and place, yet the greater must have the precedeney, Mat. vi. 33. Public advantage must not be crowded out and put by for private, nor spiritual good give way to temporal. Shimei shewed his folly in minding his wealth more than his life; and Mary, her wisdom was, improving the present time for her soul, when Martha was troubled about other things.

[2.] That generally the present time be laid hold on, and the first opportunity for the doing of good. Time is bald behind, and therefore it is good to take it by the forelock. It is the mariner's wisdom to take the first good wind that offers itself for his voyage, and it may be the merchant's policy to take the first chapman. The apostle saith, 'While ye have time, do good to all,' Gal. vi. 10, implying that they will not always have it; it is winged, and flieth away.

Sometimes, I confess, it may be prudenee, as circumstances may be, when there is a probability of enjoying another season, to defer it at present; but usually it is best to take the present, because future time is uncertain; and then it may be said, A price was in the hand of a fool, and he wanted a heart.

[3.] That if it be evident that more hurt than good will be done by our present performance of our duties, we forbear and defer them; for those duties that do not bind us *ad semper*, God leaves much to the wisdom of the faithful Christian as to the season of performing them.

[4.] That a certain good at present must be chosen before an uncertain future good, though greater than the former. If I have a price now in my hands to do myself or neighbour some good, and neglect to improve it, but defer it, hoping hereafter for an opportunity of doing myself and neighbour more good, this is sinful. I doubt not but Felix sinned in putting Paul off till another season,

though he had intended to hear him afterwards for his own greater profit, which he was far enough from, because he must know that his own life, continuance in his government, and Paul's life, were all at the pleasure of another, not at his own.

Reader, if thou art upright with God, what is said will be sufficient; but if, out of the deceitfulness of thy heart, thy plea be only a pretence for the total omission of thy duty, know assuredly that, if thou canst find no season to do God service, he will find no season for thy salvation.

CHAPTER XLVI.

A third excuse for sins of omission, it is but one sin; with the answer to it.

3. A third excuse which men have for sins of omission, is, It is but one duty I omit, and I hope there is no such great danger in that. Though I do not read the word, yet I pray; though I examine not my own heart, yet I read Scripture and mind prayer. It is true, I give not to the poor, but I am painful in my calling, and provident for my family, as God commandeth me. What hurt can there be if some one secret duty, the omission of which cannot be scandalous, should never be performed? Surely God, who knoweth our weak, infirm, nay, wicked and depraved natures, cannot expect universal obedience to his positive or negative commands. He understands that perfection is impossible to the human nature since the fall; and therefore sent his Son into the world to take away the sins of it.

To cure the distemper of the brain—for it is a kind of frenzy which makes men argue after this rate—consider,

(1.) That there is a vast difference between thy being guilty of many sins, and allowing thyself in one sin. Grace may consist with the being of many sins in the same subject, but not with the liking of one sin. As the love of money is the root of all evil, so is the love of sin the root of all the evil that befalls the sinner. He who knew he could not hinder the inherency of many sins, yet desires and endeavours to prevent the regency of any one sin: Ps. cxix. 132, 'Order my steps by thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' Observe, not any iniquity.

(2.) Consider that the omission of one duty may send thee to hell as well as the omission of many duties. One knife, one sword, one

bullet, one blow, may kill a man as well as a thousand. If thou allowest thyself in one omission, thou art a servant to this one sin: 'For his servant thou art whom thou obeyest,' Rom. vi. 16, and so the devil's slave—for he hath thee as fast by this one chain as by many—and consequently an enemy and rebel against God, and accordingly shalt suffer eternally. Thy soul, friend, is the price of every sin; and when thou allowest thyself in any one, thou dost implicitly, though not expressly, bargain with the devil, thy master, to sell him thy soul for the wages of unrighteousness, 1 Kings xxi. 20. One man, in law, may keep possession, and keep the right owner out of his estate. One sin may keep possession for Satan, and hinder Jesus Christ from his right—I mean, from sitting on the throne and swaying the sceptre of thy soul. Wallowing in one puddle defiles the body, and tumbling in one piece of filthiness defiles the soul. One piece of ward-land, though but a quarter of an acre, makes a man liable to the king, and brings in his whole estate, though he be worth thousands per annum. Therefore, friend, do not say it is but one sin, and I may be bold with it; but rather, it is sin, and so mortal, and I may not allow it. As Christ gave himself to redeem thee from all iniquity, Titus ii. 14, so do thou give thyself to him in all manner of duty. How severely have some been punished for one sin! Moses, for not sanctifying the name of God at one time; Eli, for omitting to reprehend his children according to their wickedness, which was one sin; Aaron's sons, for not fetching their fire from the altar, as some judge, were struck dead, Lev. x. 1, 2. If the righteous be recompensed on the earth, much more the transgressor and the sinner. Take heed, if Saul's sparing one Agag lost him his temporal, thy sparing one sin lose thee not the eternal kingdom.

(3.) This one sin will not go alone; thou mayest hope, when thou hast opened the door for this one sin to enter, that thou canst presently shut and keep out its associates, but it is impossible. Sins are sociable, and ever go in company. First one evil spirit takes possession of the man, and then seven more worse than himself. As there is a concatenation of graces, where one goeth all the rest follow, 2 Pet. i. 5–8, so there is a concatenation of sins, 2 Tim. iii. 2–5. They are so linked one in another, that, as in a chain, the drawing of one link brings with that a second, and that a third, and that a fourth, and all are drawn to the very end of the chain. When Delilah had enticed and prevailed with Samson, then come the lords of the Philistines and bind him, and put out his eyes, and set him to grind at the mill, and to make them sport. When one

sin, by its flatteries, hath deceived and possessed thy soul, then come others more potent and lordly to strengthen Satan's hold, and make way for others. Any one sin allowed is a great-bellied monster, who hath a numerous brood in the womb of it. It doth insensibly harden the heart, and strongly disposeth it for other sins, as one wedge makes way for another. Who could have thought that David's idleness should be accompanied with so great and cursed a crew.

He who neglects morning prayer, is hereby disposed to neglect God in his calling, and to buy and sell, and do all without his counsel. Consider, friend, if thou fall from the top of a ladder but one round, it will be many to one if thou stop before thou comest to the bottom.

(4.) This one sin allowed makes thee guilty of all sins. By the breach of one command thou disownest the authority by which all the commands are enjoined: James ii. 10, 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.' It is true, he doth not break the whole formally: he may be no thief, no murderer, &c. But,

[1.] He breaks the whole law interpretatively. He slights and despiseth the author of the whole law. He cannot obey God in any command, who endeavours not to obey him in every command. The apostle subjoins this reason: 'for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill;' so that if thou commit not adultery, yet if thou killest, thou art a transgressor of the law.'

[2.] He breaks the whole law collectively, though not distributively. All the commands are ten words, but one law. The whole law is one copulative or chain; break one link, you disorder and mar all. The whole body suffers by a wound given to any one part. The commands are considered all together, not severally, as they make one entire and perfect rule of righteousness, from which, whosoever swerveth in regard of any part of it, must needs swerve from the whole.

[3.] He breaks the whole law eventually, though not intentionally, in the consequent of his disobedience to one command. He is liable to the same curse with those that break every command. He is as truly out of favour with God as if he had kept never a command. Any one condition not observed forfeits the whole lease, be it never so large; and any one command not obeyed forfeits the benefits of the gospel, and subjects the soul to eternal damnation.

[4.] He breaks the whole law habitually, though not actually.

The same wicked nature which carrieth him out to break one command wilfully, would carry him out to break them all, if it were not restrained. This man's heart breaks every command, though his hands be tied, and he is hindered from breaking many of the commands.

[5.] He breaks the whole law by the breach of any one, because he sins against love, and breaks that bond and knot which keeps and fastens the whole law together, Rom. xiii. 10. *Qui uno peccavit omnium reus est, peccans contra charitatem, in qua omnia pendent,* Aug. Epist. 29. He that breaks one command is guilty of all, because he sins against charity, on which all hang, saith Augustine. Therefore upon the breach of one, viz., that of the Sabbath, God chargeth the Jews with the guilt of all, Exod. xvi. 18.

(5.) I answer, if it be but one sin thou livest in, but one duty thou livest in the omission of, the more foolish art thou to lose all for lack of doing one thing more. Though, as the young man said, thou hast kept all the commands from thy youth, yet if, as Christ said to him, thou lackest one thing, truly, as with him, the lack of this one thing will be the loss of all. And what a fool is he who runs for a crown, an incorruptible crown, to run within one step of the goal, and then to make a stop, and thereby to lose the prize? Is not he an unwise man who layeth a large foundation, raiseth up stately floors, is at great cost in building a house, yet for want of a little more charge about some material pillar of the edifice, suffers it all to fall down?

Reader, consider it, the omission of one duty is the omission of all thy duties. If God lose but one, thou losest all; and art thou willing to lose all thy labour, all thy days at the labour-in-vain, and that for want of taking a little more pains, and doing one thing more for thy soul and salvation.

One flaw in a diamond mars all its beauty and brightness; one blot in a writing may spoil the whole, and render it insignificant; one poisonful herb renders all the good and wholesome herbs in the pot unprofitable. Therefore do not say it is but one, therefore I may omit it; but rather it is but one duty more to all my other duties, and therefore I will not stick at it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A fifth cause of sins of omission, the example of others, with the cure of it.

5. Another cause of sins of omission is the example of others. Men are much led by the eye more than by the ear, and look rather to what their neighbours do than to what God speaketh. Though all men are not of one mind in all things, yet most in the places where we live are of a mind about evil and against good. The whole city of Sodom will join together in a sin that was against the very light of nature. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, sinned in like manner. The diseases of others' souls are far more infectious than the plague, or any other disease of their bodies. The ground why several neglect the duties God requireth is because others neglect them. They see their neighbours, some of whom are counted possibly wise men, and are, it may be, rich men and great men, and others who are numerous, to live without God, to omit prayer and Scripture in their families, to neglect the instruction of their children and servants, and they think they may omit them as safely as others. Nay, they will tell us such and such men are sober men, and understand themselves well enough, and they think it needless to make so much ado about family duties and the sanctification of the Sabbath, &c., and our neighbours generally are of their mind; and why should we be wiser than our neighbours? Oh what a ready scholar is man to learn a wicked lesson that is set him by others! If Korah conspire against God, he shall quickly have some hundreds to join with him in his rebellion. They move swiftly towards the dead sea of destruction who are carried thitherward by the tide of nature, and blown powerfully with the wind of example.

The patterns of them who are persons of quality and estate have a strange prevalency upon the inferior sort, and are often the looking-glasses by which they dress themselves. Ordinary men look on their superiors, especially if they be not scandalous, as men of wisdom, whether they be such or no, and fit to guide and govern others, and so judge they cannot err much if they follow their steps. The pharisees plead this for the omission of the great gospel duty: John vii. 48, 'Have any of the rulers or the pharisees believed on him?' Will ye be wiser than they? Do you think that if faith in this Son of man, as he calls himself, were a duty,

they would neglect it? or if he were the true Messiah, such understanding men as they would not know it?

One great man, as a great letter in an indenture, though it signify no more than another small one, hath many small ones following him. The Herodians, some think, were so called from their conforming to Herod in their religion; and it is judged the Melchites, who lived in the East, were so called from Melech, *i.e.*, of the king's religion. The works of great men are more powerful with the ordinary sort than the will and word of the great God. Again, the example of the multitude is very forcible. Men are carried down with the stream both easily and strongly. It is as common to do as the most do in irreligious as in natural actions. We think ourselves in greatest safety when we are with the most numerous party. To be singular is looked upon as ridiculous; and those who are so are counted proud, conceited precisians. Men choose rather to be sociable in sin than singular in sanctity, and to do as the most do, than as the best do. The fewness of Christ's followers was a stumbling-block to his enemies and an offence to his friends.

To cure this, reader, consider,

(1.) That no patterns of any men are valid against the precepts of God. The precepts of God are like himself, of certain purity and eternal verity; but the patterns of men are like themselves, vain and variable. Our business is not to look to what men do, but to what God speaketh. It is highly derogatory to the supreme being to make the examples of men, and not his commands, the rule of our lives. The examples of murderers, thieves, drunkards, swearers, are of as much force against the good and wholesome law of a prince as the irreligious examples of any men are against the holy and righteous laws of God. A judge would deride the malefactor's plea that should say, It is true I have broke the king's laws, but have done no more than such an esquire, or knight, or lord; I have but imitated them therein. Or that should say, I was guilty of such treasons, but I joined with many other traitors; I had good store of company with me. And dost thou think, reader, the judge of quick and dead, when he shall arraign thee for thine unchangeable estate, and demand of thee why thou omittedst the duties he enjoined thee, will accept thy plea when thou shalt say, It is true, Lord, I did live without Scripture or prayer in my family, but such and such great men who lived near me did so as well as I; I wrote after their copies, and thought it would be well enough to do as they did. Or when thou shalt say, Lord, though I neglected

thy worship and service, I followed therein almost all the town and parish where I lived, and I judged it best to imitate the most. Canst thou imagine that such a silly, simple excuse will bear any weight? Thou wilt not take such a pitiful plea from any child or servant in thy family. If thy child, when reproved by thee for drunkenness, or thieving, or disobeying thy commands, should excuse himself and say, Sir, other men's sons are as bad as I; such a gentleman's sons are worse; the children of very many meet and join with me in all my drinking, stealing, and debauched courses. How ill would such an answer sound in thine ears! Or what wouldst thou think if thy servant, instead of doing the work appointed him, should run from alehouse to alehouse, and spend his time in carding and dicing, and then excuse it to thee that he did as others did; there were many beside himself, and some of quality, who were examples to him? Consider how poor, how pitiful, how irrational a plea it is to excuse thy disobedience to God by thy imitation of irreligious men; and do not think that the great God will take that excuse from thee which thou wilt not from a child or servant. Surely there is a little more difference between the boundless, blessed God and thee, a poor worm, than there is between thee and any son or servant.

(2.) Consider, if thou wilt follow others, be they great or many, in sin, thou shalt also follow them in intolerable and eternal sufferings. The ways of such tend to death, and their steps take hold of hell. And if thou wilt walk in their ways and tread in their steps, thou canst not avoid their end: Rev. xviii. 4, 'Come out from among her, my people, and be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not her plagues.' He that catcheth the plague of another catcheth all the pain, and weakness, and ill effects of such a disease. Do not think to feed on wicked men's dainties, to live their lazy, sensual lives, and not to pay their reckoning. Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, went a-whoring after strange flesh. Here they join in sinning; but are they separated in sufferings; truly no: 'Are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,' Jude 7. If they unite in wickedness, they shall be united in woe. God will bind them up together as tares for the fire.

I know, reader, thou wouldst not be willing to dwell for ever with, and fare for ever as, wicked great men shall. 'Tophet is prepared of old; for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it,' Isa. xxx. 33.

And why then wilt thou do as they do, and resemble them now in time? It is unavoidable: live as they do here, and live as they do for ever. Again, thou art unquestionably loath to be with and suffer as the most shall to eternity: 'At the great day the world (*i.e.*, the far greater part of it) shall be condemned,' 1 Cor. xi. 31. When they shall be arraigned for their endless estates, they shall be cast and condemned to the company, and curses, and torments of the devils for ever and ever; and if thou wouldst not die their deaths, or partake of their unchangeable conditions, why wilt thou live their lives, and walk in their wicked ways.

(3.) Consider, of all patterns these two, the greatest or richest, and the multitude, are most unfit for thy imitation; because of all men these usually are the worst men, and do least imitate Christ. For great men, how few are there who are good; grace and greatness are happy and lovely, but rare conjunctions. Solomon tells us that 'wisdom is good with an inheritance,' Eccles. vii. 11. But where shall we find wisdom and wealth, righteousness and riches together? Great and rich men have their farms and merchandising, and honours and pleasures, and other things to look after than their souls and salvation: 'How hardly,' saith our Saviour, 'shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It may well be hard for him who turns the cords of love and bands of kindness into fuel to his lusts and weapons of unrighteousness. Blessed be God, there are some great men who walk religiously, but truly they are very few: 'Brethren, ye know your calling; not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world,' &c., 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Not many wise, or mighty, or noble are chosen or called of God: 'But God hath chosen the poor of the world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom,' James ii. 5. The poor are evangelised, transformed into the heavenly spiritual nature of the gospel. The poor receive the gospel; the rich receive the world, and the things of the world. The poor having little estate in the world, look after an estate in the covenant; but the rich having this world's goods, are satisfied, and desire no more. Now, reader, wilt thou follow them that are wholly taken up with fleshly, fading pleasures and riches, and cast off all care of their eternal condition? Are they fit to be thy guides who bid defiance to God, and fight against him with his own mercies, and throw off all regard and care what shall become of them for ever and ever?

Again, for the giddy-headed multitude, how unfit are they to be thy examples. Most are usually the worst. Of all creatures, the

basest and vilest are ever most numerous, as flies and vermin. How few jewels to pebbles or common stones. The weaker part are more than the wiser: 'The whole world lieth in wickedness,' as a brute in his filth, 1 John v. 19; and are such fit to be followed? The whole earth wandereth after the beast, Rev. xvii.; and is deceived by the devil, Rev. xii. 9. And are such poor tame slaves to a cruel devil, who hates them and thee perfectly, good examples for thee to imitate? Dost thou not consider what truth speaketh, 'Broad is the way, and wide is the gate, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go therein,' Mat. vii. 13. Stop a little, and ponder it. Wilt thou go after them who go in the broad way to destruction?

THE END

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